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CERTAINTY

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL

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CERTAINTY

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL

by

DOM ILLTYD TRETHOWAN

MONK OF DOWNSIDE ABBEY

dacre press
westminster

PREFACE

The title of this book is intended to suggest that it contains matter of interest to the philosopher, Christian or non-Christian, and to the Christian theologian.

The first Part, which rests on no theological presupposition, enquires into the nature and implications of certainty. The second Part considers the theological claim that certainty can be obtained by all men of good will in regard to the teachings of Christianity. It is not the purpose of these chapters to offer evidence that the Revelation alleged by Christians has taken place, only to consider in what conditions this theological claim could be upheld. On what terms would theological faith be possible? In what way could such a certainty arise? Is the traditional teaching about faith free from internal inconsistency? Is it based on a satisfactory epistemology? The 'problem of the act of the faith' continues to exercise the traditional theologians; more directly than any other theological problem it claims the attention of non-Christian thinkers.

In the following pages views are expressed which run counter to the usual teaching of Catholic theologians and philosophers. The author wishes to make it clear, once for all, that these views are personal ones, and that they are not stated dogmatically but in the hope of promoting fruitful discussion. And he submits all that he has written to the ultimate judgement of the Church.

A first draft of this book was written five years ago. On the advice of friends it was decided to publish an abridged form of this in the first instance, but it did not prove possible to do the recasting for two or three years. Then there were the delays which attend the publication of any such book at the present time. In the meanwhile some of the horses which I was flogging seem to have become moribund; at least, that is the impression which I receive from van Riet's *Epistémologie Thomiste* and from the spate of theological literature which has been pouring in from France. But if some of the references seem *vieux jeu* to the informed, they may still be useful to others. I would ask that the book be considered as no more than an outline which I hope to fill in at some future date if it should prove desirable. I hope also for criticisms which will help me to overcome obscurities and hesitancies of which I

am at present conscious and the errors into which I may have unconsciously fallen.

To my monastic brethren who have helped me in so many ways I am very grateful, and in particular to Abbot Aidan Williams of Belmont.

The dedication records a special debt in what is, I hope, a suitably unobtrusive way. I should add that the responsibility for what I have written is mine alone.

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PART ONE
PHILOSOPHICAL CERTAINTY

CHAPTER I

ON CERTAINTY IN GENERAL

1. *Introductory: The present philosophical atmosphere; Professor Price*

A certain change has become perceptible of late in the way in which philosophers regard their subject. Professor H. H. Price has in a recent address[1] referred to it in the following words: 'As we all know, metaphysics was sadly blown upon in the second half of the inter-war period. Metaphysical statements were declared to be meaningless, not even false; indeed the adjective "metaphysical" became almost a term of abuse. To be sure, a number of the subjects previously included under metaphysics might still be studied under other names, even by the most advanced thinkers. It was quite proper to study the notions of substance and cause, for example, provided one said one was studying the analysis of thing-propositions and causal propositions. You might still discuss the nature of the self or of personal identity provided you called it "The analysis of 'I' sentences". You might even have been allowed to discuss the relation of mind and body, if you were prepared to change the label and say that you wanted to talk about the relation between psychological statements and physiological statements. Thus although many of our modern analysts would profess to have abolished metaphysics, this revolution—like others—is not quite such a clean sweep as it appears. And I think that the revolutionaries themselves would admit this.' In other words, philosophy had become something quite out of touch with the interests of the ordinary man. Professor Price voices the growing suspicion that this will not do.

Later in the same address occurs this passage: 'It looks as though there were a kind of rhythm in the history of human thought on metaphysical subjects. A long period of speculative thinking is followed by a shorter period of criticism and agnosticism, and then speculative thinking begins again in a different form. At the moment we happen to be living in one of the critical and agnostic

[1] To the Joint Session of the Aristotelean Society and the Mind Association, published in the Aristotelean Society's Supplementary Volume xix (Harrison & Sons, Ltd.), *Analysis and Metaphysics*, 1945, p. 21.

periods, and perhaps the widespread complaint "clarity is not enough" is itself one of the symptoms that the period is approaching its end.'[1] It is not, then, an unfavourable time for writing about the great question: Can there be a grounded claim to know God, to receive a communication from him? But it is still necessary to urge as a preliminary the most elementary thesis of the *philosophia perennis,* the refutation, that is, of universal scepticism. This may seem an ancient and familiar topic, but it will be easy to show that it is a highly relevant one; the issue is very far from dead. The topic is perhaps a little too familiar in some quarters. The refutation is conducted parrot-wise, with its profound implications left undeveloped and without those precisions which it requires if it is to be effective in our own day. As a result it is still dismissed by the typical modern philosopher as a childish irrelevance. The fact that we do know some things for certain may not be formally denied by such a philosopher, but any attempt to build upon it is of little interest to him. Despite the change in the philosophical atmosphere his mood is still radically sceptical; the full significance of the fact of knowledge does not appeal to him. We must bring it out, give him the opportunity to realize it fully and make it the object of a real assent.

For the fact of knowledge itself leads us, if we scrutinize it closely, to the heart of metaphysics. If we are certain of anything, we are in the presence of the 'unconditioned'; that is why so many modern thinkers shrink from the subject. Professor Price provides an example of a half-way position which is becoming common. He holds that we *know* (not merely believe) that 'material objects' exist[2]—a statement which would have been rather shocking for the philosophical world not many years ago, but is now on the way to being fashionable; but he regards systems of metaphysics as 'alternative modes of conceptual arrangement by which the body of empirical data is systematically ordered . . . Thus the choice between different systems of speculative metaphysics is not a choice between the true and the false, at least in the ordinary sense of those words. It is rather a choice between the less good and the better. . . .'[3] This seems to be the old attempt to allow value to metaphysics while restricting it to the mere 'ordering' of

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 96 (in his comments as Chairman of a symposium).
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

'empirical data'. In the past such attempts have marked the last stage on the road to a total rejection of metaphysics. Any genuine revival of metaphysics must be based on the principle that it has more than a relative value. Metaphysics makes statements about reality which claim absolute truth. And the whole import of it is that it claims to go beyond 'empirical data', if by 'empirical data' we are to understand only 'material objects' and psychological phenomena. When we claim certainty we claim to distinguish reality from mere appearance. Is not this itself a metaphysical claim? But the first business of this chapter is to defend the validity of any claims to certainty; we have still to face the fact that they are repudiated to all intents and purposes by many influential philosophers. The result of this Professor Price describes in his own way when he tells us of 'the ordinary educated man' that 'for good reasons or bad . . . the Christian metaphysical system has lost its hold on him'.[1]

2. *Rejections of certainty*

In the early years of the century certainty was rejected by idealist philosophers who derived, on the whole, from Hegel—that is to say, they accepted the Hegelian view that truth lies in the whole and that the partial aspects of it which we claim to 'know' are true only in so far as they unite with all the other partial aspects in the great totality. In the history of philosophy this has been a favourite way of dodging (or rather, of trying to dodge) the question of certainty. It is a rejection of certainty, because it involves the assertion that *we* do not know the truth at all: the 'partial aspects', which are all that we know, are not *really* true (and calling them 'partial aspects' is only a polite way of saying so). The Hegelian 'system' went out of fashion, but the 'coherence' theory of truth lived on, the Hegelian view in substance under a new name. According to this, propositions are true because they cohere with one another; to which one can only reply that the commonsense answer must first be disproved before such a view can expect to gain favour. The commonsense answer is that *true* propositions do cohere with one another—because they are true. More recently the 'coherence' theory has been connected with a very different class of thinker, a certain kind of logical positivist. It is dangerous to lay down what logical positivists (of any sort)

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

mean. The point is that they have been taken to mean this by many readers. The 'coherence' theory, then, which in effect dispenses with truth, is a factor in the existing philosophical situation. It is something on which writers of a semi-sceptical kind regularly fall back (often unconsciously) when their latent scepticism threatens to become patent. Their basic contention is always the same: that the truth of 'empirical' statements cannot be certainly maintained, that is, that we can never be certain that any particular event is really happening as it appears to us to happen. Truth is not found in 'particulars'.

This doctrine is not so obviously false as that of explicit philosophical scepticism. It is not, on the face of it, the old contradiction (it is true that there is no such thing as truth) to which any frankly sceptical utterance at once reduces. We are still free to say that some propositions are true—'necessary' ones, as that the sum of a triangle's angles is always two right-angles. But the doctrine, despite this concession, leads straight to absurdity. It is a particular experience to be aware of my own state of mind—of my certainty, for example, that this proposition is 'necessary'. If all my particular experiences are uncertain, nothing is certain, for I depend upon them for all that I know. Contemporary writers often accept this conclusion in practice while continuing to pay lip-service to the distinction between the 'empirical' and the necessary. In fact an assumption that we can have only an 'approximate certainty' of anything lies behind many philosophical discussions. This is as plain a case of sawing off the branch on which one sits as the Kantian statement that we can never know anything as it really is. It is universal scepticism in its thinnest disguise ('I am only approximately certain that I am only approximately certain' ... and so on). Some examples of this kind of thing will be given in the following sections. For the moment it will be useful to add a little to the rough sketch of the present state of our question by touching upon certain excuses for it.

First, there is the deep-seated distrust of the senses, the sinister side of the Platonic tradition, which Descartes and his predecessors imposed to such effect. When this is combined with a marked tendency to reduce experience to sensible experience, a sceptical result becomes inevitable. Then there is a genuine fear of the antinomies which are supposed to arise if we do accept 'empirical' certainties. It is useful to notice this, because it controls the whole

question of philosophical method. It is not the vague fear of the 'unconditioned' already mentioned, but a rational fear based on the belief that this is no true road because it leads into a jungle. But the point is that, if these certainties are facts, we must proceed by way of them and face what meets us, even if it should appear a jungle. Here lies the great strength of the scholastic Aristotelian position—it accepts the facts, and claims that they can never lead to contradictions, though they may lead to obscurities. The obscurity which we have now to analyze, the apparent jungle, is the problem of error.

3. *Can we ever be sure of avoiding mistakes? Mr. J. R. Reid and Professor A. D. Ritchie*

The problem is that we seem to make mistakes impossible, if we claim certain knowledge of anything. This result is reached as follows: the essence of a mistake seems to lie in a claim to certainty which proves subsequently not to have been justified, and if we can make such a claim unjustifiably at all there is nothing to show that we may not be always doing so. A claim to certain knowledge of anything would be a claim that we are not making a mistake, and this claim could be sustained only if there were no such thing as a mistake. This is the muddle which usually occurs when we begin to think about mistakes. It should be fairly obvious that it *is* a muddle, but it may not be obvious how it has occurred. Let us put it in another form; we may then see more easily what is wrong with it. It may be put like this: a man, before he reflects on what he is implying, will be inclined to say that he knows some things for certain and some things not for certain; but, if we ask him to discriminate between these (alleged) two forms of knowledge, he will quickly realize that, if he does *mistakenly* claim to know some things for certain, he has no certain guarantee against mistake at any time, and 'certainty' refers to a purely subjective state, and need have no objective correlate. Thus all knowledge is uncertain if knowledge means knowledge *of* anything.

What it seems to amount to, then, is that sometimes we *feel* certain and sometimes not, because to say that we *are* certain, when we are speaking exclusively of a state of mind, is likely to put us off the proper track. There are some situations in which our state of mind is not one of doubt; there is no question of asking questions.

And there are other situations in which we do ask questions. Why this difference between situations should arise or what it means we do not know. The true state of affairs (on this view) is difficult to describe, because our language is saturated with 'associations' given to it by common sense. What, for example, do we mean by 'the true state of affairs'? Does not this imply that we are making a claim to certainty which is not just 'feeling', even if it is only about our feelings? Not necessarily, it would be answered, for to be certain *about* our feelings is only to entertain feelings of a reflective kind. We could not 'reflect' upon our feelings until they had happened, and by that time our memories might have played us false. For all we know, then, all situations are, after all, the same. We can never be sure that we had the kind of feeling which we called 'asking questions'. True, we can never be sure that we can never be sure; but this means only that it is unprofitable to talk either of 'sureness' or of 'unsureness'.

The more we have tried to give consistency to this account the more phantasmagorial it has become, and what is wrong with it is that it implies the elimination of intellect altogether and the reduction of philosophy to biology. This is general scepticism once more in one of its many disguises, for to insist exclusively on mere 'feeling' is to reject the very possibility of truth. An example of this appears in a recent issue of *Mind*; Mr. J. R. Reid is attacking the 'alleged certainty of analytic (necessary) as contrasted with synthetic (empirical) statements', and he concludes: 'If the word "certainty" is supposed to indicate anything more than a motor-affective attitude, which is *felt* at some time by *some* philosophers towards sign-vehicles which they *believe* they are in the habit of calling "analytic statements", then the alleged certainty . . . is a rationalistic myth.' The italics are his. He has been led to this conclusion, it seems, by the view that all empirical statements are uncertain. His own justification of this view is that we never can be sure what anyone *means* by any statement. Yet it still seems to him that it is worth writing about it.[1] His position, however, has an advantage over that of Professor A. D. Ritchie, as expressed in the same publication a few months earlier, that 'there are no completely hard facts, but all are more or less soft'. For Professor

[1] 'Analytic Statements in Semiosis', *Mind*, October, 1943, pp. 329–330. This publication is recognized as representative of contemporary philosophical thought.

Ritchie, although he seems to disclaim all metaphysical first principles, does venture on a definition of truth as 'a relation holding between or found among entities which form a system of a certain minimum complexity'.[1] Mr. Reid does at least go the whole way, and he admits in the passage already quoted that if his position 'is said to constitute a dilemma', he can only 'inanely repeat "I now mean what I now mean what I now mean" . . .' We have already noted that if no particular facts are true no generalized or complex ones are true either; both these writers recognize, indeed, that the two classes stand or fall together, but Professor Ritchie shrinks from the implications of the conclusion.

4. *Certainty Guarantees Itself*

It is time to put the problem in its proper form. The problem is not to find out whether there can be certainty, but to find out how mistakes are reconcilable with it. Knowledge is the datum with which we start, and that it is more than feeling is part of the datum. Let us take an example. I am walking along a road, and at a certain point I stop, uttering an exclamation. I tell my companion that there is a stone in my shoe, a statement which might prove to be untrue. But I may add 'or at least I feel a pain in my foot', and this, unless I am lying, refers to a certainty. I am certain on particular occasions that I feel pains. It is nonsense to say 'I think I am feeling a pain, but am not sure' unless it means 'I suspect that I did feel a pain, but do not clearly remember'. Even if we could never be sure of the past we can be and we *are* sure of the present. Many of the participants in the modern debate realize that these certainties are unshakable, but, even when they do not reduce them to feeling, they do not seem to realize what they mean. They are claims to know things as they are. They contain the first principles of metaphysics. Everyone knows that we cannot 'demonstrate' first principles; and nowadays they are often in practice overlooked. What can we do about it? Nothing but look at them ourselves and illustrate them. I know, then, that I am feeling a pain. I mean by this that my feeling is my mind's object. It is a certainty. I do not first feel and then reflect upon it; it is known as it happens. I know that this grasp of the feeling by my mind is a mental growth, an acquisition. The claim I make is a spiritual event. I use and cannot

[1] 'The Logic of Question and Answer', *Mind*, January, 1943, p. 27.

help using the measure of 'being', and I know that this is no 'motor-affective attitude'. I know what I mean. I am not committed to an infinite regress of interpretation.

The analysis of error will make this clearer. We have to challenge the presupposition that a claim to *certainty* can be ever mistaken; that is, we must distinguish the philosophical use of the word from the popular one. For example, I should say 'in the ordinary way' that I was certain that I could leave my chair immediately, if I should wish to do so; yet the possibility that my limbs would fail me cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, I am certain in the absolute, philosophical, sense that I am at present thinking about certainty. I am aware in the very act of claiming this that there could be no countervailing evidence. And I can be aware of this in more complex matters, at least if I accept a reasonable view of sense-perception. If we assume for the moment that we can gain evidence about things other than ourselves and from other people, can we give a sure answer to Newman's question whether we *know* that Britain is an island without conducting personal experiments? This makes us realize that answers to questions about certainties vary with our experience. There may be suspicious children in geography classes. But if anyone claims to find it unthinkable that there should be a plot to deceive him in this matter of Britain's insularity, I am not obliged to consider him as deceiving me or deceiving himself.

The simplest cases are all we need at the moment, and there is evidence that we may suppose common to everybody. 'What, then, of *cogito ergo sum?* Did not Descartes, followed by so many others, question even his own existence? And nowadays his answer is not accepted. We do not believe in "clear and distinct ideas"; *sum* is, in fact, peculiarly unclear.' The answer to all this is that certainty of one's own existence can be questioned in words but not in thought; we may try not to look at it and refuse to admit it, but in fact it is always staring us in the face. But let us admit for the sake of argument that a man may contrive to muddle himself about anything. It does not follow that *I* need do so. A *certainty* common to everybody might not, then, exist, for certainty means *recognizing* evidence. But the evidence itself is always there; not only am I certain that I exist, but also that this is a certainty available for any mind that may exist. Certainties, in an obvious sense, are private property. Each of us must 'make up his own mind', or rather discover

what in fact is in it. This leads to the heart of the matter—that there can be no *test* of any certainty.

A certainty must guarantee itself. If we require a test for any evidence, this can mean only that in fact we have not recognized it or that we have made inferences from it which do not satisfy us. In other words, a test implies a doubt. To 'prove' anything to our satisfaction means to become certain of it. If we are certain, therefore, we cannot 'prove' it. This is the trouble, from our present point of view, with the *cogito*. *Cogito ergo sum* is perfectly logical (unless we take it to mean that thinking causes existence and not *vice versa*—a not uncommon error); but the trouble with it is that it offers itself as a test of certainty, as a 'clear and distinct idea' which guarantees. We do not argue from our thinking to our existence unless we have cast a doubt on our existing. Once we have done so the argument certainly follows, and to a true conclusion. But it is always dangerous to use false methods, and in this case a danger was very completely realized in the Cartesian doctrine that what we know is our 'ideas'. If we must test our knowledge by 'ideas', we shall soon feel the need to test them also. So we slip further and further from reality. 'A clear and distinct idea' is not a bad description of a certainty, but it is not a test of it. Descartes, then, was implying a false question.[1]

5. *Deceptive uses of the word 'certain'*

The distinction between the popular and the philosophical uses of 'certainty' calls for more discussion. For instance, we might question whether we are certain of our own existence in the philosophical sense before we have appreciated the distinction. Until we have realized that the question about existence can be raised, and that it is an improper question, can we be said to *know* that we exist? Don't we just take it for granted? And is not 'taking for granted' precisely what we opposed to 'certainty' in the absolute sense? The answer is that 'taking for granted', when we oppose it to 'certainty', is just the same as going beyond our evidence, jumping (as we say) to a conclusion. It is justifiable only as a 'pragmatic' certainty—that is, I am justified in acting as though tomorrow's sunrise were inevitable, even though as a theist philosopher I might have doubts about it. But we may take things for

[1] *v.* Gilson on the historical position of Descartes, in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (London), 1938.

granted in another sense without any jumping; we know things without needing to reflect upon our knowledge. We may not see all the significance of our knowledge without reflecting upon it; but some things are properly taken for granted, because they *are* granted and we just take them. It is true that we may not have expressed a distinction between our 'pragmatic' and our 'philosophical' certainties, but this does not mean that we do not 'really know' our own existences. The fact that some of our claims are loosely formulated does not invalidate every one of them. We may use or 'live' a certainty in the word's absolute sense without using the word itself in any sense. But could we not be absolutely certain about what is only a pragmatic certainty? No, for to ask this is to misconceive what is meant by 'absolutely'. Absolute certainty, or knowledge in the strict sense, is the possession, the vital acquisition, of evidence. In so far as we have it there can be no questions. Questions arise in so far as we guess on the basis of evidence, for we cannot even guess without some seeing of evidence. That is the meaning of 'uncertain knowledge'; it refers to our guesses or 'pragmatic' certainties, or more exactly to their verification which we consider possible for some mind. Knowledge itself is never uncertain; but we, when we know some things, are uncertain, do not know, whether they point to other things beyond them. Knowledge is our awareness of the fact; *facts* are not probable—they just exist.

Such views, for those brought up on modern philosophical 'orthodoxy', are distasteful. In the long run we either 'see' or not —that is the whole point; we either look at the evidence or keep our eyes shut. Still, some things may help. First, we must try to look behind mere sentences. The verbal expression of what we claim as certainty is complicated by questions of interpretation (though, when I say 'I have a pain', that seems quite solid). What we must concentrate on is our private certainty, the mere 'enjoyment' of it, apart from anything we say about it. If others have certainties or uncertainties, that is their affair. My friend asks me the date of some event; I, no historian, state my ignorance. I am quite sure that I am ignorant of it. I may *have* known it, and so I might recall it. Or I might guess it. But, as he asks me, I draw just a blank. Even such a negative certainty is not meaningless. It shows that I can take my mind as object and make a report of what I find in it—in this case that I find nothing in it to the purpose.

But all my evidence, in the word's true sense, is of this kind. I have experiences, mental as well as sensible, and in so far as I assert them, I am infallible. If I go further than my evidence, I may be mistaken. But I can be sure that I have not gone further—which is what 'seeing evidence', strictly as such, precisely means. If I see evidence, I must assert it, not necessarily in an explicit statement but as my own reaction to it. My mind is active in regard to it. It takes it over. I find that I cannot possibly deny it, which means that I am actually affirming it. We can pile up descriptions of this act, but our descriptions are necessarily inadequate. All words have a material connotation, and what we are trying to point to is mind itself. This gives the pragmatist his opportunity. 'All that you can say', he argues, 'is that your nature clamours that you are certain. And that is all there is to it—a clamour: a most pragmatical summary of the business.' Here the dividing line is reached at last. Can we accept this statement of our experience? Or is there an anchor of the soul, even in the natural order, sure and steadfast? *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

It might seem that we should stop circling round the point. Yet we can only circle round first principles if they are questioned. This claim, then, to a personal infallibility has nothing monstrous or paradoxical about it. It does not say that we are in every sense infallible; it says that there is a kind of certainty which we always have, narrower than the 'certainty' of common speech because it refers to intellect as such, prescinding from any economic influence. We say we are certain that this or that has happened, meaning sometimes (although we may not realize it explicitly) that this is the only answer that comes to the mind, but not that no other answer *could* be given. We must make prudent judgements for practical purposes on pain of a general economic breakdown. But all our judgements are not of this character. There are others which we do not commonly reflect about, but which we can isolate if we care to do so. In these we know that no other answer is *possible.* We know this without first needing to reflect about it. The sceptic's question causes the reflection, and leads us to make certain things explicit. But we were certain before the sceptic's question. What is explicit now is not the certainty, the luminosity of mind itself, but the contrast of our successful guesswork with it (for we are prone to judge things by results, and memory blurs uneconomic differences).

It is important to realize what does and what does not become explicit, because certainty in the proper sense is a conscious state. It is a conscious growth of consciousness. *This* is always explicit. We *come to* realize that we have made mistakes; we do not come to realize that we *know*. We just do know. But when we come to recognize that we are often only guessing when we describe ourselves as 'knowing', then the contrast between the two states brings the meaning of 'knowledge' more clearly into the open. Here we may note that 'I feel certain' is ambiguous. It may mean (and we have taken it to mean so far): 'No other answer offers; nothing occurs to make me doubt this finding (though something might).' But it may also mean: 'I *know* the answer. Nothing could possibly occur to make me doubt it. I say "I feel" merely to emphasize that I am conscious of it, that I exclude all doubt *in* my awareness, in the same act in which I see the evidence, although I need not put the formal question whether the "evidence" is simply evidence and not (in part) the product of my guesses.' In other words, it could mean 'I feel certainty', referring to a distinguishable character, a *kind* of consciousness opposed to others. We seem to be committed to both meanings. Can we make out the second? But, if we do, are we not testing certainty?

6. *Further description of certainty: the question about its scope*

No, it is not a test, but another description. Certainty (and by this will be meant in future absolute, philosophical, certainty) must be appreciated for what it is, and in the act of seeing the evidence. I am certain of some things and uncertain of others, and this means that I must be able to tell the difference.[1] The trouble is that 'pragmatic' certainties seem to feel like real ones, and this makes us wonder again whether there are 'real' ones. For some philosophers (let us say, for argument's sake) there are not—except the fact that they may find it all so difficult. If we can show them *that* as a more than pragmatic certainty, they may then go on to discover a good many more. But we could say (without damage to the argument) that they had had no previous certainty of anything. This sounds unlikely enough; it is hardly possible to be muddled from the first act of consciousness. Are we to say that certainty is a luxury, *acquired* by a few who have some powers of analysis? The assumption here has been that we all have had cer-

[1] But not necessarily to formulate it philosophically, as already mentioned.

tainties, and not only from the time when we started to philosophize; this would be (more probably) the time when we first got muddled. We feel the need, then, to distinguish our past certainties. It is worth trying, but it is only a side-show. Even if we had to give up the project, we can be certain at present and in the future. Anyhow, some of us can.

Distinguishing past certainties is a puzzling business. At first we may think we are facing border-line cases. But we ought to realize then that they were not certainties, or rather that we are not certain they were. This brings about an obvious restatement. We may *have been* certain, although we have now forgotten it, for certainty refers strictly to the present, although it may be certainty of the past. If we distrust our memories altogether, then we give up at this point. But that must not be an *a priori* judgement. We make mistakes about the past more easily (so we may think) than about what is actually happening. But every case would have to be judged on its merits until we were certain (finding some law of nature) that no past certainty could be known in the present. This, one suspects, would not be the normal finding. Was I not certain of my existence when I was writing the last paragraph, that is, am I certain now that I was certain? Can I distinguish this from my assumption that I should finish it and write another? I 'took this for granted', let us say, did not deliberately exclude the chance that I might never pen another sentence; but did I, then, exclude the chance of error when I was certain that I was existing? Not necessarily, if by this exclusion we mean some *statement* that there was no chance. That we have seen already. But in a real sense I did exclude it, and always do so. There is a difference, and a perceived one, between the cases. Can we describe it further?

What does 'perceived' mean here? It means that when I am certain that I was certain, I refer to my intellect as having acted precisely as intellect. We are so used to talking about perception as though it could mean only sense or emotion, and we have seen that the words we use of intellect are the same words which we use of these other fields. Intellect, we saw, can be *indicated* only by words which refer strictly to other things. It is an ultimate.[1] We

[1] Dr. A. C. Ewing in an article to which we shall be referring again ('Knowledge of Physical Objects', *Mind*, Apr., 1943, p. 144) makes the statement (puzzling from our point of view): 'There are grave *technical difficulties* about giving a definition of "know".' (Italics mine.)

are trying once more to isolate it, and the question of our own existences may have helped us. Our knowledge of self is a permanent undercurrent; it is not doubtful, yet it is far from *clear*. The point is that we can really know things, although the object of knowledge remains obscure. Knowledge (or certainty) is the same always in the sense that there can be no degrees of certainty. But the object can be revealed to us incompletely, and we can be aware of this incompleteness. (How we can be so aware is a further question.) We hesitate, then, to recognize self-consciousness, because it lacks a conceptual clarity. It is not like an answer to a simple sum or the conclusion of two undoubted premisses. It does not burst on us like a dazzling light, but is rather the light in which we always see things. We are more interested in them than we are in it. What is true of self-consciousness is true of all our certainties. Certainty as the character of intellect does not (normally) interest. We are not in the habit of thinking and talking about it, and so we feel unfamiliar with it and vague about it. We try to judge it by irrelevant standards and so lose grip of the character itself. That, again, is why memory of it worried us; we remember only what has claimed our interest. And it is interest that causes error. Error encroaches on intellectuality, when we are restive under our evidence. Intellect, knowledge, certainty, is contemplative.

Here we must leave the question of past certainties; all we *must* have is certainty for the future. If we can say that there is such a thing as certainty, the awareness that we are not, *cannot* be mistaken, we can go forward. If we require to put the formal question: 'Could I be wrong in this particular instance?' then, if the question is real, really needs asking, we are uncertain. There may be cases in which we shall have to ask it, but what it means is: 'Look again at the evidence. You are not sure that you *have* seen what you seem to see.' It is a means to certainty, not a test of it. If we are certain, we cannot ask real questions about the evidence; we know that all questioning is beside the point. We know that this is more than a brute instinct, that we are not constrained by a preconception, not making any construction with any 'category'.

We may feel that this is true enough of one certainty, the certainty we have that we exist, but that nothing much else may be thus known for certain. We may be able to take a step forward if we consider a certain famous objection.

7. On distinguishing waking from sleeping; some implications

'Can you distinguish', it runs, 'by a real difference the sort of dream in which you feel most awake from what you claim as a genuine "certain" awakeness?' Many philosophers (Dr. Ewing, for example, in the article mentioned in the last footnote) are doubtful about it. Thus they can never be sure whether they are sleeping or waking. It is pointed out that we can even dream that we pinch ourselves, just to make sure that we really are awake. We cannot claim certainty, therefore, of anything without denying it of our dream-experience.[1] For my own part (and many, I think, would agree immediately) I should so deny it. There is a distinction between being awake and dreaming it, although it may defy analysis. We may suggest perhaps that there is a grasp or a steadiness always found in the one in some degree and not in the other. But it is worth noting what we should commit ourselves to on the other view. We should be saying that what we call dreaming and what we call waking *might* be the same, that there might not be such a thing as either if by either we meant to exclude the other. (For, if we can never be certain that we are awake, we can hardly be certain that we are ever dreaming.) If we deny this general proposition, we must base our denial on actual experience. We must be able to know the difference in practice. The difference is not that I know in sleep that I am dreaming, whereas in waking life I know that I am awake, but that in sleep I do *not know* that I am awake, whatever assurance of it I seem to be claiming.

It would seem, then, that we might all claim consistently that we are really awake at the present moment, and so know that there is a difference between sleeping and waking. This would be a step forward. We should be certain not only of our existences, but also of these particular aspects of them. And we may use this as a pointer to our knowledge of an external world. If we are certain that dreaming differs from waking, is there no difference in the *things* we know in each case? We claimed the lack of a character of consciousness in dreaming, however vividly, that we were not dreaming. We may now realize that we mean by dreaming being aware of a special class of objects. The lack of a character in dream-experience was a lack of a certain positive awareness. Does this suggest that the 'objects' in dreams are *inner* in some special

[1] For if we are ever *inevitably* deceived, we may be always in this condition.

sense as opposed to those of our waking life? Can we be certain of waking without an outer object (outer again in a special sense opposed to the former)? In other words, do we need for it actual experienced contact with things outside us, or contact at least between parts of our own 'outsides'? The theory would be that we use no external senses *in* dreaming, though dreaming is *caused* (they say) by a jolt to them. 'Dreaming' itself seems a flux of inner images, lacking the special outward reference of waking knowledge.

In any case, what we need to establish is that knowledge is more than bare self-consciousness. We are never aware in fact of mere awareness; always we are aware of something or other. And here again we always make a distinction. Some sorts of knowledge involve a genuine *impact*: others we seem to extract from ourselves—or they 'rise' to the surface. Sometimes surely we have *fresh* pieces of knowledge; they may be only 'ideas' (let us say) and thus 'parts of ourselves', but they are *caused* at least by an outside agent. Other 'ideas' may be in us already somehow, and we may not be prepared to say how they got there. *Those* however are really a new creation, and we are certain that *we* did not create them. 'We' must exclude the solipsist or the pantheist. But unless we are muddled by their false theories, we do not doubt either ourselves or 'outside' objects. That is the proof that the theories are false—so far as there is one. We are certain (sometimes at least) of foreign objects—objects we know that we have not known before. Objects in dreams may be only a mixture of previous experience; seeing fresh objects *is* experienced as such.

This is no claim to refute all 'idealists'—only the purely subjectivist or emanationist kinds. If I create my own experience always, it is pure assumption on my part to say 'we'. But I *know* that 'I' is in fact opposed to 'other', and I know that 'other' is not an 'aspect' of 'I'. This is the basis of all 'objective' positions. It is claimed to be *given* as certain, and cannot be 'proved'. My experience does not exhaust reality; that it does not is in fact included in it. This, of course, is another dividing line. If I can write off *process* as an illusion, then I can say that reality is one. But if I face my manifest limitations, I must accept a 'pluralist' universe. That I just *know* (though I may go on to show it by saying that nothing can really change *itself*).

'Outside' objects here need mean nothing spatial; spatial ex-

tension is not the present subject. But even if we have no extended organs and all our knowledge is of a spiritual world, something beyond ourselves is causing some of it; some 'ideas' are derivative from 'outside'. 'Cause' is a word which raises all sorts of prejudices; but the meaning of it is part of the actual datum. We may not say yet with the 'older theologians': *signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui.* But at least we may recognize that we are not absolute, but must submit to the absoluteness of evidence. And our claim to infallibility would be less surprising if we could say *in lumine tuo videbimus lumen.*

8. *Certainties gained by induction and on authority; more implications*

Can we reach certainties by an inductive process? Can we build up a certainty with uncertain materials? Let us consider a Pacific Island, newly reported by some explorer. At the first hearing we are uncertain about it (unless we know the explorer and really trust him). When it appears on the map and in newspaper columns (say, as the scene of some decisive engagement) we are unable to entertain a doubt of it. This is perhaps more striking than Newman's question whether we know that Britain is an island. For here we can trace more clearly the gradual growth of certainty. So much evidence leaves us still uncertain; so much more, and we are unable to doubt. This is queer, but it seems to be undeniable. The principle in each case is that authority can make claims which we recognize as valid. We can exclude the chance of deception on certain occasions. How much evidence we may need in particular cases is hardly a subject of possible analysis.

We may think at this point that certainty is not easily come by; its claims are absolute, and this seems alarming. We feel perhaps a danger of claiming a certainty and then discovering that we have smashed the theory. For if we claimed to be certain of something and then were shaken, we should have undermined the whole position. We cannot fail to be certain of our own experience, if by 'experience' we mean only sense-data and the awareness of 'what goes on in our minds'. But trouble arises when we interpret sense-data, and this raises all the problems of 'physical' objects. The fear is due to the haunting suspicion that we might be tricked (without any means of avoiding it) by the behaviour of 'physical' (that is, extended) objects. Shouldn't we say we were sure that the

stick in the water (this is the time-honoured case) *was* bent at an angle, before we learnt to be careful by experience? Here the reply seems valid that at this stage of reflection we raise no question about sense-data, we do not consider how they represent distant objects, and so we cannot be said to have given a faulty answer. 'This stick is bent' would mean that there *looked* like an angle; we are not claiming as certain that this would be felt if we touched it.

If as philosophers we are doubtful in general about material objects, we cannot make more than 'pragmatic' errors about them. But if we happen to be certain about them in some cases, why should we fear to be certain about them in others later? Certainty, we have always to remember (and the trouble was just that we had forgotten it), means that we know that we are not now mistaken. Whether we shall be certain in future and how often no one can tell us.

9. *Some Thomist accounts of certainty; a criticism*

We might expect to find that the *philosophia perennis* consistently supports the view that there can be and is absolute certainty of 'empirical' facts. But, if we turn to Dr. Phillips's *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, we shall find that this is not so. The certitude of evidence, he tells us, 'is now commonly divided (among Scholastics) into metaphysical or absolute certitude and conditional certitude which is either physical or moral' (certitude, that is, which is conditioned by the constancy of laws of nature or laws of man's conduct). Disclaiming any intention of settling the difficulties to which this division gives rise, he continues later: 'some writers would deny that physical and moral certitudes are formal certitudes at all, since in their view unless all possibility of error is excluded we cannot have formal certitude, as the essence of this is the exclusion of all fear of error.' He adopts, however, as the most reasonable view that which accepts moral and physical certitudes as formal certitudes on the ground that 'they exclude fear of error . . . there being in fact but a mere possibility of it, due to the fact that we are dealing with contingent things'.[1] But the exclusion of which he here speaks is not, as in the previous quotation, absolute; and it is obvious that we can have no genuine certainty, in the sense in which we have been using that expression, so long as there

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 11–13.

is *any* possibility of error. It would seem, then, that we have no genuine certainty of the physical or moral kind either on the view which Dr. Phillips rejects or on that which he accepts. Now this may seem to be a satisfactory conclusion, for physical and moral certainties may seem to mean predictions or interpretations which we are not concerned to claim as certain. But the final remark of the last quotation about 'contingent things' has in fact further implications.

'Contingency' is opposed to 'metaphysical necessity'. Dr. Phillips has already referred in this passage to 'the very nature or essence of the thing known' as determining metaphysical certainty, and it now becomes clear that he equates this metaphysical certainty with certainty proper, denying the latter any wider field. This is common teaching in Scholastic manuals;[1] it would follow from it (although the implication is not drawn out) that the knowledge of my own existence, for example, which is a contingent truth, is not certainly known. The error in this position is to suppose that *things* are certain or uncertain. *Things* are uncertain only in the irrelevant sense that they might not have existed. But that they do or do not actually exist is certain—that is, I may be certain of it.[2]

This reveals an important and disquieting feature in modern Scholasticism. If certainty is restricted in this way to knowledge of 'natures' and of metaphysical laws, the charge so commonly levelled against Thomism of proceeding by unacceptable deductive methods becomes unanswerable. Our knowledge of 'natures', whatever that may prove to be, will be left unsupported, if we deny certain knowledge of the concrete particular; our knowledge of 'principles' will become properly suspect. At the root of this, it seems, is a 'conceptualist' tendency, contrary to the most fundamental principles of Thomism, but present in St. Thomas. This is a vast question to which only a brief reference can be given here.

[1] But there are more satisfactory accounts, e.g., Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, 669.2 and 683.2.

[2] This is well treated by P. Harent in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (art. *Foi*, coll. 211–215, a reference to which, curiously enough, is given by Dr. Phillips himself). This writer considers (col. 206) that philosophical manuals are generally unsatisfactory on the question because their compilers are ignorant of the precisions made by theologians in discussing the certainty of faith; also that the tripartite division of certainty into metaphysical, moral and physical was unknown to the earlier Scholastics.

Knowledge of anything seems to St. Thomas (sometimes) to mean the power to give a definition of it; certainty is confused (as in Descartes) with conceptual clarity. The Aristotelian doctrine that knowledge is of the 'universal' is responsible for this. The doctrine is not untrue, but it is, on St. Thomas's own principles, incomplete. Intellect, on his principles, is the 'faculty of being'; abstraction is only a function of the lowest of intelligences, the human—it is not typical of intellect as such. Intellect as such is intuitive; it means union with its object, the direct confronting of the subject by a thing, not by its 'idea' but by the *being* of it.

It is clear that self-knowledge is, in St. Thomas's mind, a privileged case of certainty. Yet his Aristotelianism leads him to a general disparagement of human knowledge in the realm of particulars, for here, he seems to suggest, errors cannot be excluded.[1] The fact seems to be that his thought was not at one with itself on the question of knowing particulars, and later Scholastics, as so often, failing to use his ultimate principles, either implicitly abandoned them or merely reproduced his own hesitancy.[2] Hence the persistence of the view that the only genuine certainties are 'metaphysical'. This is especially unfortunate at the moment because thinkers are coming to recognize that they will find in Thomism the philosophy of 'existentiality' which they are seeking. Any suggestion that it is after all concerned only with 'essences' has a deterrent effect, and is unfair to St. Thomas's real mind.

[1] It is not the business of this book to settle questions of an historical kind. But those who require justification for the statements contained in the above may be referred to Rousselot's *Intellectualisme de S. Thomas* (Part II, chaps. 1–3 *passim*), where they will find abundant references. (The book exists in an English translation—not very reliable, unfortunately—published by Sheed & Ward.) Rousselot's work is of the highest importance, and its influence upon these pages has been great. It is a critique of St. Thomas's view of intellect which has given a much needed emphasis to the distinction between intuitive intellect and discursive processes. The Platonic elements in St. Thomas's thought are underlined. The author is regularly criticized, and with reason, for over-stressing the non-intuitive features of *human* thought and so endangering its validity (a tendency which he himself realized and later corrected). The book is unlikely to leave the reader with a fully coherent view of the subject before his mind; but it contains suggestions which seem to the present writer of great value, some of which will be pursued in later chapters. The present reference is simply to Rousselot's evidence for a certain incoherence in St. Thomas.

[2] Dr. Hawkins points out to me that his hesitancy was in fact bound up with the lack of a satisfactory criticism of experience.

Finally, on this matter of the modern scholastic attitude to our question, it is noteworthy that formal refutations of scepticism are often considered to suffice; the difficulties to which the doctrine of absolute certainty appears to give rise are not analysed. The analysis of them which has been undertaken in this chapter has had perhaps the further positive advantage of showing some implications of the general principle (itself the purest Thomism) that intellect, whatever its objects may turn out to be, is (as such) infallible.

10. *Moral of this chapter seen in a recent debate: Dr. Ewing*

It will be useful to apply these conclusions to the discussions between Professor Aaron and Dr. Ewing in recent issues of *Mind*. Dr. Ewing's views are representative of a body of opinion (possibly large and certainly influential) which rejects the anti-intellectualism of the logical positivists but hesitates to return to the traditional positions. And Professor Aaron's acceptance of these positions illustrates those hopeful signs in modern philosophy which were referred to in the last paragraph. Professor Aaron's article 'Intuitive Knowledge'[1] is concerned with Dr. Ewing's British Academy Lecture (1942) 'Reason and Intuition'. He considers this lecture to advocate a modified view of the traditional theory which 'might appropriately be termed a "Fallibilist Intuitionism" ',[2] since Dr. Ewing wishes to support intuition, but yet is prepared to grant its fallibility. Professor Aaron opposes this view and argues that '*intuitionism is the theory which asserts, in the face of all sceptical criticism, that absolutely certain* knowledge occurs in human experience'.[3] Dr. Ewing replied[4] to this criticism that he had 'never meant to describe all intuitions as fallible', but was concerned to justify fallible intuitions (he has in mind 'not only the inspired insights of great genius but most of ordinary men's moral, aesthetic, not to say religious intuitions, and most of his (*sic*) commonsense beliefs outside logic and mathematics, in so far as they are intuitive at all').

This 'reverent agnosticism' is not of interest here. What is of interest is to discover whether Dr. Ewing believes in infallible intuition or not. He begins his reply to Professor Aaron with the statement that he is 'not prepared to deny that there is such a thing'.

[1] *Mind*, Oct., 1942.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 301.
[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 317. His italics.
[4] *Mind*, Jan. 1943, pp. 51–53.

Yet he is not prepared to affirm it either, as we shall see, and there is no half-way house between certainty and uncertainty. Dr. Ewing goes on to ask: 'Surely it is not psychological inspection which settles the certainty of an *a priori* proposition?' This suggests, first, that we have to *find out* whether we are certain or not. In fact we either know for certain or we do not; we may *become* certain (and so find something out), but until we are certain of a proposition we are either ignorant of it or *un*certain of it. There is no question of being certain and then finding *it* out. The question also suggests that we make things certain instead of being made certain by things. But 'psychological inspection' does answer the question 'Am *I* certain?' in so far as it is a question at all (it really means 'Shall I certainly find out?' or 'Can I certainly remember?'). 'Psychological inspection' *settles* certainty in no other sense, unless this merely means that knowledge *is* certainty. And here is Dr. Ewing's real trouble—he cannot accept that conclusion. When I say that a thing is certain *because* I know it, I am not giving a reason for its certainty. I am merely saying 'I know that it is'. Moreover the two phrases 'I know' and 'It is' refer to a certain identification. *Intellectus in actu,* says St. Thomas, *dicitur intellectum in actu.* This, no doubt, is mysterious, but it is clearly the only account of the matter. I must be *united* with my object; it must become myself in that sense which we can all experience but none of us define.

'We should further have to see', Dr. Ewing goes on, 'that a particular state of mind logically entailed the truth of all propositions cognized in that state, and can we comprehend such a strange sort of entailment, still less know it with certainty?' What does 'logically entail' mean here? It suggests that 'I know that something exists' involves 'something exists' by reason of some kind of logical rule. But 'I know' is not a logical rule, but the fact on which all logical rules depend. If we cannot comprehend 'such a strange sort of entailment', we cannot comprehend anything. Dr. Ewing shrinks before the absolute claim of mind. How can *we* impose necessity on things? Or rather how can we find necessary truth in a deceitful world? As Professor Aaron observes in a footnote[1]: 'Philosophers today are no doubt hesitant about the metaphysical implications of intuitionism', adding (to the relief no doubt of most of his readers) 'I do not consider this point in this paper....'

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 306.

It may be useful to pause for a moment to consider a common confusion which arises from thinking of knowledge as a 'logical entailment' of one proposition by another. 'I know that this exists' is an empirical proposition, and it is considered axiomatic in some quarters that no empirical proposition can be certainly known. For, it is said, it is not logically necessary that I should know that this exists—that is, the negative of the proposition is not self-contradictory. Therefore it is logically possible that I do not know it. Unless we have a prejudice against certainty, it will be quite obvious that this result does not follow. All that follows, as Professor Aaron puts it, is that 'there is not the logical reason for asserting (such statements) to be true which exists in the case of those sentences whose negatives are self-contradictory'.[1] The fallacy has been exposed on various occasions, for example by Mr. Norman Malcolm.[2] It has been exposed by the whole argument of this chapter. In the illustration which we have just given of it there is the further false assumption that what we know is always a proposition.

Dr. Ewing's conclusions must be quoted in full. 'But can we ever be justified in being sure that we have not taken something for granted wrongly when we think we are intuiting with certainty? However much we have considered a proposition, how can we know in the strict sense that further consideration might not disclose that we had? I cannot help being convinced that I know with certainty, *e.g.* the law of contradiction and the proposition that I am not in great pain at the moment I write this, yet I do feel that there are serious difficulties about the notion of absolute certainty which have not been wholly solved to my satisfaction. Perhaps the answer is that in some cases we can see that the recognition of our being wrong is senseless, or that the subject matter of the proposition is such as to leave no possible scope for wrongly taking anything for granted, as in the case of judgments about present experiences, while in others, though perhaps equally certain subjectively, we cannot see it and we are therefore not justified in claiming absolute certainty. In that case the difference

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 312.

[2] 'Certainty and Empirical Propositions', *Mind*, Jan., 1942, criticized but accepted in principle by Mr. Max Black, *Mind*, Oct., 1942, in a discussion under the same title. These references must not be taken as endorsing the conclusions of these writers in any general way.

would lie not in our subjective state of mind, but in the nature of the proposition contemplated. But this is only a very tentative solution to a problem which I did not intend to discuss in my lecture.' Dr. Ewing is still undecided. We need not go over all the old ground again in considering these disappointing conclusions. Clearly it is 'the nature of the proposition' which makes us certain, or rather the existence of the fact. But if, as Dr. Ewing seems to think, we cannot distinguish 'feeling certain' ('pragmatic certainty') from *being* certain, then we are universal agnostics. We may have a merely 'pragmatic' certainty of what is in fact true. But we cannot have an absolute certainty of what in fact is false. For if we say that, we must *always* be doubtful.

This subject, perhaps, has become wearisome. But it may have helped to show that 'modern philosophy' is only a bogy if it frightens us away from traditional doctrines, from 'metaphysics'. Its shrinking from metaphysics is its undoing. But, as we have seen, there are hopeful signs, and we may turn for the last time to Professor Aaron's article for illustration. We have seen what he means by 'intuitionism'. He mentions as historical advocates of it Aristotle, Aquinas, and Descartes. But he has received it in the vitiated form which it assumed in Descartes, and with this in mind we shall find the following conclusion of high interest: '. . . the traditional theory is modified in one respect in this paper, for the claim is made that intuitive knowledge is to be found in the empirical field. Characteristic of Descartes' intuitionism is the assumption that intuitions occur only when the intellect knows intellectual objects (in particular the intuition of "simple natures"), and he would have been uneasy about the extension of intuitive knowledge beyond this realm. But we are here suggesting that it *should* be so extended, that intuition pervades the empirical field, giving us, I should hold, not merely certain knowledge of the existence of physical objects, but also certain knowledge of some of the structural features and relations within that physical world, so that we are entitled to think and reason about it. Consequently, while the intuitionism of this article must combat those extreme empiricist theories which would deny the presence of intuitive elements in our empirical knowledge, it can nevertheless co-operate with, and indeed strengthen that empiricism which asserts that all human knowledge is empirically derived. . . .'[1] This is the true mind of St. Thomas.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 317–318.

CHAPTER II

THE GOAL OF KNOWLEDGE

1. *The Problem of Knowledge*

It is not the present purpose to outline an epistemological treatise covering all the usual ground. Our knowledge of 'things' has been recently handled by Dr. Hawkins[1] in a way which should commend itself to unprejudiced minds, and Dr. Farrer's great book[2] has made it unnecessary to argue in detail that we know *ourselves* as substances. But certain questions about knowledge of 'things' and 'selves' require treatment before we may speak of the certainty of God's existence which is to be our subject at the end of this chapter. If certain elements in the Thomist theory of knowledge are examined, some common misconceptions about the knowledge process may be removed. To that end the co-operation of cognitive with bodily powers will claim immediate attention, and this will clear the way for the later chapters on the subject of supernatural knowledge.

That we know ourselves as being both extended and inextended at the same time is a fact of experience: Thomism, unlike many other philosophies, makes no attempt to reduce one side of the complex datum to the other. It analyses the datum and seeks to remove apparent antinomies. All true philosophy is fundamentally analysis. Negatively, it sifts out error. Positively, it sifts our own experience, helping to reveal its deeper levels. But what is the connexion between the levels of our experience and our own bodies?

If our thoughts and our muscles belong (as they seem to belong) to two sharply contrasted orders of reality (for the former clearly lack that character of being extended which we attribute to the latter), how can the mind be aware of the body? This is perhaps the real problem of knowledge. Awareness is a spiritual phenomenon, and we might be inclined to describe it as a self-grasping which is enriched by 'ideas', spiritual entities which put the mind into communication with realities other than itself. But then we

[1] In *The Criticism of Experience* (Sheed & Ward).
[2] *Finite and Infinite* (The Dacre Press).

face the fact that we are aware of *bodily* things, our own bodies and foreign ones. It might look as though we were forced to hold that the mind forms a sort of mental replica of the 'physical' object.

This is what is known to modern philosophy as the 'Correspondence Theory' of knowledge. It is universally repudiated, and with good reason. If our knowledge is only a 'copy' of the reality, we could not know that there was a reality behind the 'copy'. The theory—which is generally associated with Locke—denies in effect that we do know *bodies* at all. It sets up a screen between ourselves and the things which we claim to know. It can issue only in pure subjectivism. This attempt to link up mind and body leads to the disappearance of body, as the history of philosophy after the time of Locke abundantly demonstrates.

Thomist philosophers have pointed out time after time that their theory of knowledge is *not* the correspondence theory. Yet it remains a conviction in many quarters that their retention of the commonsense facts is essentially bound up with the Lockean view. It is therefore worth while to repeat at the outset, although it ought not to be necessary, that St. Thomas himself repudiated it in the clearest terms. As we shall see in more detail later, whatever St. Thomas meant by the *species*, he did not mean by it 'idea' in Locke's sense of the word; for he insists that it is not the object, the *quod*, of knowledge, but the *quo*, the instrument.[1]

2. *Sense-knowledge and intellectual knowledge*

Before we proceed further it is important to notice that in Thomist language knowledge is not the equivalent of intellection. Thomists refer to the intellect and the senses as distinct knowing faculties. The principle is that if objects are of different orders there must also be faculties of different orders. A knowledge which is confined to bodily things is of a different order from one which extends to 'immaterial' things. The former is sense-knowledge, the latter intellectual knowledge. And a sufficient proof that we know immaterial things as well as bodily things is found in our awareness of our own minds in their activities; we have both faculties.

In what sense can we accept this result? Our awareness is in-

[1] The *locus classicus* for this is *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Question 85, Article 2. (Such references will be given later in the following short form: *S. Th.* I, 85, 2.)

divisible, and in us it seems that the higher faculty includes the lower. Our awareness begins in sensation, bearing on our bodies, and it is the same awareness, apparently, which bears on our minds. We might at first suppose that there is a clear distinction between sensation and intellection in that the organs of sensation are extended whereas the higher modes of awareness have no such organs. But sensation is not itself extended. It is conditioned by a change in the bodily organism, but so is *all* our awareness. We may distinguish the role which awareness performs when it bears on the body from that which it performs when it bears on the mind. But the distinction does not seem to warrant us in attributing to ourselves two distinct functions. We cannot say that intellect 'takes over' from the sense-faculty without accepting the consequence that it must *know* the sense-faculty's findings in order to use them. And then there is no reason for requiring a special sense-knowledge. Intellect, on any showing, must gain its materials from *sensibilia*; it reaches down to the bodily level. It seems to follow that sensation in us is the first stage of intellection. Later we shall find more detailed justification for this summary conclusion.

What makes us think that we have two parallel cognitive faculties is perhaps a certain assumption about brute-psychology. We think of the brutes as having a form of knowledge which we share with them and of ourselves as having another form also which they do not have. It does not seem plausible to regard them merely as bundles of reflexes. And it is also clear that their power of knowledge is very different from ours. As compared with ours, it suffers from certain restrictions which are obviously of the highest significance. Their awareness lacks some higher role which ours possesses. But this does not justify the proposal that there is a special faculty for knowledge of bodies which must be present in its own right before it can be 'taken over' by a higher faculty. Even if we assigned to the brutes a sense-faculty which should bear only on bodily things, it would not affect our conclusions about our own psychology.

It is worth while at this point to consider what we ought to mean when we speak of the knowledge of brutes. For it appears that we have in fact no grounds for attributing to them a knowledge which bears only on bodily things. By 'knowledge' we mean at least 'awareness'. And 'awareness' includes the knowledge of ourselves as aware. This is not simply a knowledge of bodies.

If the brutes' behaviour suggests to us that they have knowledge of bodies but that they have *no* form of reflexion, we are faced with a result which is meaningless to us. We cannot use it to solve any problem. We have no experience of 'pure sensation', that is, of sensation wholly divorced from reflexion. If we use the expression in this sense we are postulating an *unconscious* immaterial activity, which is not to the purpose. The conclusion seems to emerge that our knowing faculty differs specifically from that which we may presume the brutes to possess. But we are entitled to speak of two faculties in ourselves only in the loose sense that our scope of knowledge embraces theirs.

3. *Thomism and the genesis of knowledge*

There are certain unpromising features in Thomist manuals and quasi-popular expositions which must be distinguished from the central doctrines. A recent manual, for example, assures us that 'by sensation we know the qualities of things, secondary and primary, just as they are'.[1] This might suggest that Thomists are committed to a theory of 'naive realism'. In fact they have come more and more to adopt a 'critical realism', a theory of sense-data as caused by external objects, which is making headway also in other quarters. The same author's language about the *species* in sensation might be equally disquieting. 'All knowledge takes place', he tells us, 'through the presence of the knower to the thing known.... This can happen in one of two ways. The thing known can be present either through its physical reality in the act of knowledge . . . or through some vicarious image of it. The Scholastics call this the *species;* for it is the form in the knower of the thing known, the intentional similitude.'[2] That is, the mind of the knower '*tends to*' the object in so far as it is informed by the object's 'similitude'. It sounds like the correspondence-theory. Dr. Hawkins uses safer language when he calls the *species* 'that assimilation of the subject to the object which is required in order that the subject may know something other than itself'.[3]

But let us admit that St. Thomas had not worked out a complete theory of sensation, and that the Thomist doctrine of the *similitudo* in sensation is not free from inconsistency. It is more important to notice that Thomism, unlike other intellectualist philosophies,

[1] *Cursus Philosophiae,* by C. Boyer, S. J. (Desclée, 1937), vol. II, p. 23.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 29. [3] *The Criticism of Experience,* p. 116.

accepts the plain fact that all knowledge is based on the data of sense, and since knowledge (certainty) actually occurs, it follows that the deliverance of the senses must be veridical. It is only too easy to go ahead of the evidence and to fall into error. But it is always possible to avoid error by abstaining from any 'interpretation'. It may be objected that our certainties about the external world will be very few. There is no need to dispute this. A few will suffice for our present purpose. We are concerned only with the process by which we reach them. And we are concerned with this only so far as it reveals to us the general laws of man's development.

We must now notice that the Thomist doctrine of sensible *species* appears in a context which threatens us with another embarrassment. (It was hinted at in the previous section, but postponed for reasons of convenience.) 'Without the impressed species', writes Dr. Phillips, 'no knowledge of finite things is possible, since it is the function of these to unite subject and object by assimilating the object to the subject, dematerializing it to a certain extent.'[1] But knowledge is always an 'immanent' act, a growth or modification of the subject which is not 'material' (in the sense of 'extended') at all. It is conditioned by some modification of an extended surface by some other such surface. But you cannot measure or weigh cognition itself. And we are faced with the difficulty that if what is known is no longer 'material' we cannot claim to know the *thing* itself.

The sensible species are called 'partly material' by Thomists with the implication that they act as a link between matter and spirit. If they are to be wholly 'dematerialized', intellectual activity must come into play. The 'image', the fruit of sense-knowledge, still belongs, in some sort, to the sphere of extended things; it still needs to be freed by the intellect from 'materiality'. As a result the 'intelligible species' makes its appearance, the counterpart on the intellectual level of the 'sensible species'. It would follow again that we must change our object before we can know it. A gradual process of 'dematerialization' only adds the further difficulty of conceiving of something 'quasi-material'.[2] It looks as though Thomism might be unable after all to relieve the apparent opposition between mind and matter which introduced us to our present

[1] *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 223.

[2] For such expressions, v. Phillips, *loc. cit.*

discussion. It does not seem to be relieved by the theory of act and potency. If we say that the material object is 'raised' to immateriality, that its 'potency' for immateriality is made actual in knowledge, we are still left with the implication that we *change* the object. The object in itself, in its materiality, would remain unknowable.

Yet the Thomist answer to Kant is precisely that knowledge cannot involve this change. Kant's denial that we know the thing-in-itself is the denial of knowledge. Knowledge, as Thomists insist, is not a 'making' but a 'becoming'. It is a union (but not a confusion) of subject and object. It requires that there should be between them a certain identity. The object must be present to the subject in some way without intermediary. Knowledge itself is, in the literal sense of the word, intuitive. This is the Thomist principle which must be retained at all costs. If the theory of *species* seems to fall foul of it, then we must reinterpret that theory. The theory, in any case, cannot *explain* what knowledge is. That is, the union of subject and object is *sui generis,* and cannot be expressed in any terms but its own. Can we give an account of sensation which shows how our knowledge of bodies can be both intuitive and yet a knowledge of *bodies*?

4. *The material and the immaterial*

We must approach the problem of our knowledge of bodies by considering what is meant by the material as opposed to the immaterial. In the Thomist account, as we have just noted, it might seem that what is material could never be known. But it must not be thought that all Thomists hold the same view on the subject. P. Romeyer, S.J., for instance, has written as follows: 'The material objects of this universe being intelligible in the totality of their formal and material elements, there is no point in introducing an active intellect whose sole function should be to make the object actually intelligible by freeing it from its materiality.'[1] This offers us a first clue for a constructive enquiry. All our knowledge, we shall now propose, is conditioned by matter in so far as it rests upon bodily contacts as its indispensable basis. And there is no opposition between the body and the knowing power such that the latter may not be directly united with it. We are, in fact, conscious bodies. We may set ourselves, our conscious bodies,

[1] *Archives de Philosophie,* vol. vi, chap. 2 (2nd edn.), p. 461.

in an opposition to the same bodies in their unconscious state. But we must not set consciousness of our bodies in opposition to the bodies themselves. We are conscious *in* them. Our minds transcend them in so far as they are mere (unconscious) bodies; but yet our minds do not leave our bodies behind. We are mind and body—and our bodies are actuated by our minds. It is a Thomist doctrine that the mind and the body make up a single substance.

'Matter' must not mean something radically heterogeneous to the intelligence. We must not think of it as a hard, dead lump which must be transmuted into mind's substance. All beings are *acts*. To say 'something is' means that we find a certain activity. What, then, is the distinction which we all naturally make between the material and the immaterial? Fundamentally, it is the presence or absence of certain limits to which we refer. Our knowledge is a progressive escape from limitation; we *gain* the 'other' in the unique and indescribable union of knowledge. In some way we take over its 'act', a determination (or 'form') is shared between us. But the objects which we call 'material' seem to lack this power of growth; they seem shut in on themselves, confined to their own activity.

What right have we to make statements like this? How do we know that these objects, these activities, lack the familiar features of *our* activities? We may say that we conclude it from their behaviour, and this is on the whole satisfactory. But we may say further that we have encountered those limits in our own bodies. Knowledge presents itself to us as an emergence—out of we know not what, but yet out of something. We know that we are not always knowing, because our knowledge has this emergent quality. We know our bodies to be unknowing apart from the consciousness which we exercise in them. The things which affect our bodies, we therefore conclude (and it would seem conclusive), are of the same unknowing material; they have those limits which we are somehow conscious of surpassing.

But it is all very well to bring the material and the immaterial closer together by saying that everything is an activity; the fact remains that they must be united when we know bodies, and this may still seem incomprehensible. There is still a gap to be filled. There is still the old difficulty that our *awareness* of heat is not hot. Don't we *alter* heat, therefore, when we know it? But what do we mean by hotness and coldness? They are sensations arising from

some change in the dark background from which we emerge. They are activities of that background which have emerged to the conscious stage. They seem foreign to thought because we refer them to the dark background. It is only a prejudice to think that we are not directly conscious of them. We may say that our thought *is* hot when it arises in the activity called 'being hot', if sensation is thought (that is, human awareness) in its first stage.

This section must end with a note on the use of 'matter'. 'Prime matter' is just the capacity for substantial change, as when wood becomes ashes. 'Matter' in this sense is unknowable; we argue to it from its effects. But we do not refer only to 'prime matter' when we call bodies 'material'. We refer to extension in space and we think of it as the condition for the appearance of sensible qualities. Extension refers to something positive, some sort of act. (At the same time it implies a limit, a tying down to a certain position.) Extension, quantity, in the positive sense, is no more foreign to mind than hotness and coldness. Our consciousness of our own bodies explains how we become directly aware of extension. It is an activity *in* which we become conscious. And our consciousness of our own bodies explains how we become conscious of other bodies. We know them as affecting parts of our own bodies, and we know parts of our own bodies only as so affected—or as affected by other parts of our own bodies.

5. *The intuitive perception of the external world*

It must not be forgotten that there is no question of *arguing* to the existence of an external world. It is a sign of healthier times that Professor Price has called it 'not only unnecessary but also misleading' to do so; 'misleading', he adds, 'because such a procedure suggests that it is initially uncertain whether a material world exists or not.'[1] Our concern is with the implications of the fact that we do know such a world. We know other bodies because our own bodies make contact with them—that is the commonsense basis which has been laid down. It requires some comment. At first it might seem enough to say that we share an activity with the body which has come into contact with us. But we must refine on this. A bodily contact must always occur before sensation, but this does not mean that two bodies fuse at some point or

[1] *Op. cit.* (*Analysis and Metaphysics*), p. 96.

points. It means that a relation of causal efficacy is established between them. 'Awareness', Dr. Hawkins writes, 'being of its nature capable of transcending the subject, finds the possibility of intuition in the causal presence of other things.'[1] The wood of my desk communicates to my finger a determination; a quality of its surface is reproduced in my finger. I do not share its surface, but my surface shares with it a common pattern. And I am intuitively aware of it as having this pattern.

Here Dr. Hawkins must be quoted again: 'It is because I have a genuinely intuitive perception of the chair on which I am sitting, and because I have at various times been in contact with the familiar objects in the room, that I am able so unhesitatingly to rely on my sensations as indications of real bodies surrounding me.'[2]

Let us take a case. What do we mean by saying 'there is green grass'? Something like this: 'there is a sort of visual sense-datum which I have reason to believe is experienced by others, and which we agree to call green; it arises in the sort of context which in the past has always proved to provide sense-data of a certain kind when I have conducted experiments.' 'Grass' is a name which I give to a centre of activities. We find certain sense-data appearing in certain conjunctions which lead us to think that they are bound up together by some central control. All we know of a 'substance' is that it is the control, the organism, of these accidents which are in contact with us. But how can we say that a *green* accident is in contact with us? And how can we say that the *grass* itself is green? 'Green' refers to something which happens in the sense-organ of sight in certain conditions, among them being the effect upon it of light-rays. We must answer that the light-rays are the visual datum; if I say that the grass is green, I mean that this particular datum arises in such conjunctions as to convince me that its green character must be caused (in part) by a distant object, namely the thing called grass. Something about the surface of grass when the light falls on it causes the light as it falls on my eye to produce green colour. 'We never obtain a direct and exhaustive knowledge of material substance, because we know it only through the data of sense-experience and in so far as it is implied by them. We can conceive of a pure intelligence which should know things at once in their intelligible unity, but our own intelligence has to proceed

[1] *The Criticism of Experience*, p. 110. [2] *Ibid.*

gradually, starting from that partial apprehension from a point of view which is sense-experience.'[1]

If our previous conclusions are sound, it follows that we may speak of an intellectual intuition of bodies. This is a departure from the regular Thomist doctrine. As we have seen, this doctrine distinguishes sense-knowledge from intellectual knowledge in a way which seemed to cause difficulties. We are now in a better position to appreciate one of them. The Thomists recognize that our knowledge must be based on direct awareness and they therefore speak of sense-knowledge as 'intuitive', while denying that we have any such intellectual knowledge. But if sense-knowledge is knowledge at all, the Thomist theory of 'dematerialization' applies to sense-knowledge for the same fundamental reason for which it applies to intellectual knowledge. It follows that we have no intuitive knowledge at all. We may note as a further excuse for departing from Thomist orthodoxy that there is a hesitation in Thomism in regard to the cognitive status of sense-knowledge. On one side we find reference to a *sensus communis* by which sensation becomes in an 'imperfect' manner reflective. On the other we have, for example, a remark by P. de Finance in his recent *Etre et Agir*[2] that we cannot follow St. Thomas in giving to pure sense-knowledge an 'absolute cognitive value'. There seems room, therefore, for fresh suggestions.[3]

The main conclusion to which this chapter has been so far leading is that our human (intellectual) awareness bears intuitively on its first (bodily) objects. It is not only some lower activity of a sub-human order which claims this function. The intuitive character of our intelligence at its emergence on the sense level guarantees the objective validity of our further discoveries, of the knowledge of the self or substance which arises in this emergence, of the knowledge of 'being' which arises from the interplay of the knowledge of 'self' and the knowledge of 'things', of all that organization of knowledge which is the work of rational discourse. With this basis established, we may speak of 'non-

[1] Dr. Hawkins in an earlier work, *Approach to Philosophy* (Sands, 1938), p. 56. Cf. Dr. Farrer's account (*Finite and Infinite*, p. 200); in particular, his insistence that it is the 'self' which shows us 'thinghood' is to be noted.

[2] (Beauchesne) p. 272.

[3] It is noteworthy that Dr. Hawkins in *The Criticism of Experience* avoids the usual distinction between sense-knowledge and intellectual knowledge, although he does not disavow it.

intuitive' knowledge meaning by that our indirect knowledge, our knowledge which is gained by an indirect method. There must be some object gained without intermediary, if there is to be knowledge at all; but there is no objection to an intermediary if we mean by this an object which leads to the knowledge of some other object 'beyond' it. This is a subject which will recur. We must now turn to the Thomist doctrine of the 'intelligible species' or concept. The topic will lead us to a deeper study of the union of subject and object[1] in the act of knowing and so pave the way for further advances.

6. *Conceptual Knowledge*

'We may say', writes P. Maréchal, 'that every knowing faculty is naturally intuitive, that is, that its proper movement, its act, proceeds of itself direct to its object.' So far, so good. What follows, however, brings before us the difficulties of the Thomist account: 'but there is intuition and intuition . . . the sense brings the subject in contact with a real thing, but it does not of itself discern reality. The criticism of the sense-datum and the true perception of the real spring from a higher faculty—the faculty of "being", intelligence. The intellectual act, considered precisively and according to the present conditions of its exercise, is thus constructive, synthetic, but *not strictly intuitive*. . . .'[2]

'Conceptualism' is the name which is given to theories according to which the intellect seems to construct its objects so as to involve once more the fatal consequence that in knowledge we change reality—that is, we do not know. The passage quoted is enough to show that P. Maréchal has laid himself open to this objection, which has been made by some of his fellow-Thomists. His view of the data of sense seems to make them only the occasion of knowledge, and this leaves knowledge without any genuine object. Perhaps it is just because he perceives so keenly the intuitive character of knowledge in general that he fails to recognize its humble beginnings in human knowledge.[3]

[1] Whether 'direct' or 'indirect'—an 'indirect' object is no less an object because it is 'indirectly' reached. All knowledge has a character of intuitiveness in a broad sense.

[2] *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics* (tr. Thorold), pp. 98–101.

[3] A similar remark has been made earlier in regard to Rousselot. Here it may be noted that the editor of his *Intellectualisme de S. Thomas* has added to the

But it might appear from our findings so far that all Thomists fall into conceptualism. If we now examine what is meant by the 'concept' or 'intelligible species', we shall find that in St. Thomas's doctrine we do not 'construct' our object, despite all appearances to the contrary, save in the harmless, necessary sense that our knowledge of 'things' is gained piece-meal. In Thomism there is a distinction between the *expressed* intellectual species or formal concept and the impressed species. The latter is described as 'fertilizing' the intellect; the former is the inner 'word' formed by the knowing faculty as it performs its act. It is the vital response of the intellect to the information which it has received. By it and in it we know the object. How we do this may not be immediately apparent. But St. Thomas makes it abundantly clear that whatever difficulties may seem to be caused by some of his statements he means us to take it as his consistent teaching that we really know the external object. '*Intellectus noster . . . fertur . . . ad cognoscendam rem.*'[1] We must not be misled, then, when Fr. D'Arcy describes the concept as a 'skein' obscuring the mind's vision, and disclaims 'any theory of immediate apprehension without qualification'. We must note that he also claims that 'we know reality directly', although he adds 'and yet concepts play a part'.[2] If we turn to the long Appendix on the concept in M. Maritain's *Degrés du Savoir* we shall find that an identity between subject and object is the sheet-anchor of the whole argument. What part, then, does the concept play in Thomism?

Let us consider Professor Gilson's account. He calls the impressed intelligible species an 'intermediary of such a kind that without ceasing to be the object, it should yet be capable of becoming the subject'. 'Intermediary' is a disquieting word. But he also writes that 'thought knows the thing itself, without the interposition of any intermediary'. Again he describes the species as 'the object considered in its action upon a subject'. It is called a 'direct resemblance, formed by the object of itself and impressed upon us by it, as indistinguishable from it as the action of the seal upon the wax from the seal itself . . . not a representation of it, but its impress,

second chapter of the second part a valuable note (unfortunately omitted from the English translation) which shows that Rousselot subsequently recognized that he had fallen into 'irrealism'. He came to realize that we must claim an 'intuition of presence' on the sense-level.

[1] *De Veritate*, 2, 6. [2] *St. Thomas Aquinas* (Benn), pp. 88 f.

and, so to speak its prolongation'. This seems wholly acceptable. The expressed species or concept proper is the fruit of the real union of subject and object. 'The intellect which produces the concept "book" does so only because it has first become the form of the book, thanks to the species which is nothing but this form itself. . . .'[1]

It will be useful to note what Professor Gilson has to say about a discussion between M. Maritain and P. Roland-Gosselin, a discussion of which the Appendix in *Degrés du Savoir* forms an important part.[2] 'We fail to see', writes Professor Gilson, in a footnote to the section quoted above, 'wherein lies the disagreement between P. Roland-Gosselin and M. Maritain on this point. The identity between the species (and hence the object) and the intellect, which M. Maritain rightly asserts, is in no wise contradicted by the non-identity, equally rightly asserted by P. Roland-Gosselin, between the object and the concept.' Confusion arises, Professor Gilson thinks, because *similitudo* is used both of the impressed species and of the concept, which 'considering the conditions under which thought expresses it is no longer identical with the object'. 'Not wholly identical', perhaps we may say. For, if the formal concept, as we have seen, is only the fruit of the real union between subject and object, it must retain genuine continuity with the object itself.

The fact that our concepts are 'universals' need not cause us embarrassment. When we say 'here is a brown cow', 'cow' does not just refer to *this* cow, nor does 'brown' refer only to the present instance of 'brown'. But our sentence refers to a direct knowledge of *this* combination of cowness with brownness, to *this* total object. The Thomist formula that sense knows only the particular and intellect only the universal[3] must not be taken to mean that we have a distorted view of our objects. 'Conceptual' knowledge is not tainted with unreality. That is the conclusion which this section urges. It is a form of knowledge which *selects* from reality. It is synthetic because it must piece together its meagre results in the attempt to exhaust the complex richness of reality. But, such as they are, these results are real.

[1] *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (tr. Bullough: Heffers, 1929), pp. 266 f. A 'form' is an 'active principle'.

[2] Prof. Gilson is commenting on earlier stages in the discussion. M. Maritain makes no reference to these comments in the Appendix, written a few years later.

[3] This must be judged in the light of St. Thomas's careful insistence that it is rather *man* who knows, whether by 'sense' or by 'intellect'.

Our minds have the power (denied to the brutes, by every appearance) of recognizing as common, although in *this* combination, characters which are in reality common; and that, no doubt, is what ought to be meant by 'dematerialization'. We free these characters from the particular conditions in which we find them. But we do find them in these conditions; we do not invent them. When Thomist writers tell us that truth lies in the known conformity of our conceptual synthesis with the 'real' object, we must not allow this language to blind us to the immediacy of our acquaintance with the real objects. M. Maritain, for example, uses this language. But he is careful at the same time to stress the fact that the knower and the known are one and the same in the precise relationship of the act of knowledge.[1]

7. *The affirmation of being*

Our apprehensions are at the same time affirmations. And our affirmations have always the form of the judgement. There are always four elements in every judgement. Even when we say just 'here is something', we are aware that a certain character is found by ourselves to attach to something. We distinguish this character from the something in the same action by which we distinguish ourselves from our present awareness. In other words, we know substances, including ourselves, only through accidents; we know them as reproducing their accidents in ourselves. It is only 'behind' our acts that we know our natures. We know them, indeed, but only in a succession, as it were, of flashlight glimpses. We are conscious primarily of the flashes themselves; we hardly notice the background which they dimly enlighten. But our knowledge of self is sufficient to have repercussions on our knowledge of 'things'. 'The self', writes Dr. Farrer, 'is the only substance which can be described in any proper sense . . . it is the foundation-stone of all metaphysical knowledge, and the quarry from which the materials of all further metaphysical thinking are drawn.'[2] Thus we affirm the existence of finite substances, and in this complex fashion arises the notion of *being*.

A thing is a 'being'. Each is a *kind* of being. What are we to make of this word 'being'? We cannot say that each 'being' is a part of a grand totality to which 'being' properly refers, for the

[1] *Réflexions sur l'Intelligence*, 2nd ed. Paris, 1926, p. 247.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

parts would have to differ as parts, and their differences, on this showing, would also be being (so, after all, they would not be differences). We can close our eyes, like so many modern philosophers, and deny that 'being' has any meaning, basing our denial perhaps on some arbitrary 'verification principle'. If we open them, we shall find that 'being' in fact reveals to us the ultimate notion of Infinite Act. But it does not directly reveal this to us. It is only *through* finite being that we rise to the knowledge of Infinite Being.

The fundamental flaw in St. Anselm's 'ontological argument' lies, we may now suggest, in its failure to make this clear. St. Anselm begins with a notion of absolute perfection and then argues that it must refer to an actual existent, not to a mere mental construction (for that would be lacking in a possible perfection). What needs to be proved is that we have this notion, and this can be done only by showing how it arises, that is, on the basis of finite substance. And then there is no place for the further argument which seeks to show that the 'notion' refers to actual existence. We can have a notion of absolute perfection only because such perfection exists to cause our notion. We can 'imagine' a composition of objects, that is, we can put together imaginatively two or more objects which we have known; we can imagine that dollars are in our pockets. But we cannot construct the objects themselves.[1] A notion of absolute perfection could not be derived from the process of imaginative composition.[2] Therefore it bears on a real object. The regular complaint that St. Anselm has made an illicit transition from the ideal to the real order suggests a false opposition between these orders.

This approach to the question of God's existence may seem to strike an unfamiliar note. But P. Maréchal has written that once the mind has been 'released' by the deliverance of the senses 'it goes at once to the very end of its course and implicitly affirms, under the aspect of the partial data, this Absolute, this saturating unity which is both its motive and its end'. And again: 'the human mind . . . is a faculty *in quest of its intuition*—that is to say, of assimilation with Being, Being pure and simple. . . .'[3] It is St. Thomas's

[1] We could have no notion of a dollar if metals were not in existence.

[2] *v.* 'A Note on the Ontological Argument', by Dom Mark Pontifex, *The Downside Review*, Oct., 1944.

[3] *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, p. 100.

doctrine that all affirmation is implicitly an affirmation of God's existence. We have now to consider how it becomes explicit.

8. *The demonstration of God's existence*

Do we gain explicit knowledge of God's existence in virtue of a syllogistic logical process? The famous *Quinque Viae* of St. Thomas suggest that we do. There is no need to examine these 'ways' in detail. It is a sufficiently established conclusion that they may be summed up as follows: if contingent being exists, then necessary being also exists.[1] The question which now faces us is whether we gain the result 'necessary being exists' by a process of thought which uses two syllogistic premisses. If we did, the process would take this form: if contingent being exists, necessary being also exists; now contingent being does exist—*Ergo*. The trouble about this is that it could not demonstrate anything to anybody. The first premiss of the syllogism could not be stated without an awareness that 'necessary being' does stand for something; the conclusion would have to be known at the start. It might be said that a man could entertain the notions of necessary being and contingent being, and might still need to know that contingent being exists in order to know that his notion of necessary being is verified in reality. But this statement seems based on that unsatisfactory theory of what ought to be meant by a 'notion' or 'concept' which we encountered in the last section—again there is a false opposition between the 'ideal' and the 'real'. A notion, to repeat, is not a source of knowledge apart from the object or objects from which it is derived. We cannot gain knowledge of necessary being on a basis of thinking *in vacuo*. That is not what abstraction means. Abstraction is a focusing on something real, on an element which is present before us in reality. The importance of a right view of conceptual knowledge may be now more apparent.

The notion of necessary being, then, cannot arise without an acquaintance with that to which it refers. But do we not feel the need to 'verify' such a notion? Only in the sense that we may not

[1] *v.* 'How do we demonstrate God's existence?' in *The Downside Review*, April, 1946, and Dr. Hawkins's criticism in the October number following, which also contains a reply to the criticism. Certain paragraphs from these articles are reproduced in what follows, but it has not been thought desirable to go over the ground again in detail.

be certain whether or not we have really gained it and may therefore need to go over the ground which suggested it to us. This ground is the existence of finite, contingent being. '*Since* contingent being exists, necessary being also exists.' That is the formula which we must find for 'verification'. But all this means is that we gain our knowledge of necessary being by *an act of attention* to contingent being. It does not mean that we advance from the one to the other by stages which can be set forth in the form of syllogistic premisses.[1]

Syllogistic inference has a very limited role in the mind's activity. Our most important metaphysical conclusions are reached *in* experience by a process which may be called 'immediate inference'. 'We seem to proceed', writes Joseph, 'from a given judgement to another, without anything further being required *as a means* of passing to the conclusion.'[2] Joseph, it is true, has not in mind the sort of metaphysical inference with which we are concerned. But his description is serviceable. He recognizes, further, that even in hypothetical inference 'what is seen to involve certain consequences is something in the nature of the facts supposed.'[3] In inference we are always 'apprehending connexions of fact'.[4] If, then, we have an apprehension of God in apprehending his creatures, it must be that we apprehend creatures as connected with him. We bring out from a total datum what is at first only implicit and make it explicit. When we affirm God's existence we *focus* on one side of the total datum, bringing it explicitly into consciousness. It is as thus 'abstracted' from the total datum that we know God.[5] We know him 'in terms' of creatures, but *with* them we know him as transcending them, as perfect and infinite. When we say that he is perfect and infinite intelligence, or that he is intelligent 'in an eminent way', we refer to the *relation* in which we find him. We find him as the source of our intelligence; we find him as pure intelligence. Yet we *share* nothing with him.

[1] The articles in *The Downside Review* referred to in the previous footnote contain a detailed defence of the view here stated against possible charges of theological heterodoxy. In particular, it is stressed in them that the evidence for God's existence can be 'demonstrated', as the anti-modernist oath declares.

[2] *An Introduction to Logic* (2nd ed.), p. 232. [3] p. 332. [4] *Ibid.* (*n.*)

[5] God is not an immediate datum except in the sense that every object of knowledge must be united with us. But this sense is all-important. We really know him, although our knowledge is gained indirectly—*through* our knowledge of his creatures.

These results will appear contradictory only if we forget the *uniqueness* of this relation. There cannot be any question of *justifying* it—it is the evidence, what we *find*.

It may still be urged that there must be some valid and useful syllogistic process which has God's existence as its conclusion. For, since we have no intuition of God, we must infer his existence; and is not inference syllogistic? Let us answer this by experiment. Proofs of God's existence must be (like all philosophical procedures) analyses of experience. They take up immediate data and scrutinize them. They conclude that these immediate data are not self-explanatory. The fact of change is the obvious starting-point: it carries with it a demand for explanation—change means the appearance of something new. Whence has it come? Not from the changing being, for it cannot give to itself what *ex hypothesi* it does not possess. We must go beyond the changing being for the explanation. Until we come to an unchanging being, we shall not have the explanation. There does exist, then, an unchanging being. This or some other being must also be *unchangeable,* for, if an unchanging being *could* change, some other being must exist which could change it. This unchangeable being cannot increase—in that sense it is perfect. But is it also infinite? It is, but this must be *seen.* Here is the crucial point. If a man says that he doesn't see it, we can only say: 'Look at it.' Unchangeable being *means* independent being—being which is self-sufficient, necessary; activity which depends on no other activity, having its existence in its own right. And so we go on, using such resources as human language offers, in an attempt to utter the ineffable. What does it all amount to in the end? Simply that the changing implies the unchangeable, that finite being implies Infinite Being, the first implication—if it means anything positive—being the same as the second.

It does mean something positive; but we can only point to it. When St. Thomas develops the proof from change, he is pointing to the most obvious sign of *dependence.* When he concludes that there must be a Being who is *independent,* Pure Act without potency, he is pointing to the other side of a single picture which has been always before us. For, if we care to look, our whole experience or any part of it reveals to us the dependent and the independent, the one in a unique and indescribable relation to the other. 'Cause', when we consider it closely enough, means 'God'; anything else which we call a cause is such in virtue of his causality.

Until we find his causality, we do not know the full meaning of the notion. And we find his causality *in* his created effects. We do not find first a 'principle of causality' and use it as the middle term of a syllogism. 'Nothing can change itself' proves to *mean* 'nothing can give itself being', and this proves to *mean* 'limited being implies unlimited being'. We can find this implication only because we can find both terms standing *in* this unique relation. The proof of God's existence, then, is both harder and easier than syllogistic proofs. It is harder because it requires a *vertical* movement, a jump from the sphere of the relative to the absolute. The conclusion does not force itself on one *in the same way* as syllogistic conclusions. It does not emerge as a mere extension of previous conclusions, something on the same level. But it is easier than syllogistic proof because it presents itself to us in all our thinking. We can put up barricades against it, but it is always besieging us. It will take possession of us, if we will face reality.

The evidence for God's existence, in fact, cannot be denied without denying thought itself. All affirmation declares a necessity. It is the very notion of truth that it is something imposed on us from without as an absolute. And this character of absoluteness carries within its meaning all perfections, all the divine attributes. To say that 'something is' is the same as to say 'something has being' —Being, that is, is acting upon it, present to it. But *it* is not pure Being. 'Pure Being' must mean something or we could not deny it of *this* being. 'Being', then, contains an implicit reference not only to this or that limited being but to pure Being. But we do not find pure Being by *arguing* from an 'analogical' notion. We can only look at what 'being' stands for until it breaks into finite and Infinite. It may be objected that 'being' refers to a common (univocal) notion—that of experience in general. Whatever is presented to our minds as an object we call a 'being', and we mean nothing more than that it is so presented. We may mean only this on occasion. But 'X exists' does not mean *only* 'X is appearing to me'. 'Things do not mean,' the objector may urge (quoting Cook Wilson) 'it is we who mean.' True, we can only stake our claim to employ our meaning; others must find it, if they can. Dr. Hawkins, for example, cannot. Following the Kantian tradition, he does not allow that 'existence' (being) is a true logical predicate. 'Existence and individuality are one,' he writes, '. . . it is primarily a factor of unlikeness in things, and only secondarily, in so far as

there is a likeness in the mode of unlikeness, has . . . unity of meaning.'[1] This gives rise, he adds, to the theory of analogy—which, *en bon Thomiste*, he no doubt accepts. But what is this 'likeness'? Must not the answer lie in that profounder significance which we have claimed for 'being'? And must it not be that beings are 'alike' because they *have* being, because they are acted upon by the infinite agent? How these beings are also 'like' pure Being is a further question.

9. *The Theory of Analogy*

We are thus led to a comparison of our results with the usual theory of analogy, which lies at the heart of the usual proofs for God's existence. The theory purports to explain to us how we can predicate 'being' (and other transcendent notions) both of ourselves and of God. There is 'likeness', we are told, in the two cases, and 'likeness', as Dr. Hawkins notes,[2] means 'identity in difference'. Official Thomism tries to explain the identity by appealing to a 'proportional similarity' and so to make it innocuous. But even the most sympathetic non-Scholastics have found it an insuperable difficulty to admit *any* 'identity' between God and his creatures. Mr. Mascall, for example, has avowed with refreshing candour: 'I am at least conscious of the problem even if I do not know how to solve it.'[3] Our suggestion is that the 'analogy of being' should refer not to any intrinsic community among beings but to the *relationship* in which the finite is discovered to stand to the Infinite, a relationship which is *sui generis*. We may call it 'likeness', but here all words are misleading. This presupposes that the terms of the relationship have been already discovered. It will bring this more to a point if we now examine the conclusions of P. Penido, who is the standard authority on analogy among modern Thomists.

P. Penido does make certain valuable admissions. He insists that analogy begins where St. Thomas's 'Five Ways' end, that is, with our discovery of God. When we rise to the knowledge of God by means of a 'transcendent notion', such as that of intelligence, our discovery that it is 'transcendent' (that is, not univocal, not merely a notion applicable to all instances in one same sense) is the discovery that it refers to two essentially different realities, God and

[1] *The Criticism of Experience*, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *He Who Is*, p. xi.

his creation.[1] So far Penido's account seems to bring it out clearly that we do not reach this result by the use of some general law brought in from outside; we find it by analysing concrete experience. It is true that he considers the result as mediated by our recognition that the original notion carries with it degrees of more and less—our original notion of intelligence must become thus 'supple', he tells us, before it can lead us to God. But this (which is St. Thomas's Fourth Way) is only a psychological propaedeutic, a Platonic suasion. It will not lead us by merely logical necessity to the knowledge of God, and it should now be obvious that this conclusion applies just as much to the other 'Ways'. But Penido does not make this conclusion his own in definitive fashion. His general tendency, in fact, elsewhere is to fall back on the 'analogous notion' as a logical medium. Our thought can bear directly on God's goodness, he tells us later (another important admission), but only *through* the idea of 'universal' goodness formed on the basis of creatures.[2] This implies the usual appeal to the syllogism. It seems to make the greater emerge from the less.

Let us see how P. Sertillanges deals with the common objection that we cannot demonstrate an infinite cause on the basis of what we allege to be finite effects. Clearly the answer depends on what 'basis' means. The effects are the basis, we shall say, and imply God's existence in that they show *him* to us as Cause; they carry the character of *his* effects. But P. Sertillanges's answer is: 'The propositions which we make in regard to God and the proposition "God exists" itself express only postulates of experience, and must be understood as referring to God only in function of experience, not to God in Himself.'[3] We find God as our creator, in other words, but *not* in himself. This has an acceptable meaning, but as an answer to the objection it seems to be hedging, and no subsequent appeals to analogy make any difference. In other contexts Thomists allow that we cannot know God's existence without knowing something of his nature, and this is surely obvious. We must claim, then, a movement of thought in which we find *God*—obscurely and inadequately but in reality. This is Dr. Farrer's conclusion. If we called this movement (in his phrase) a 'cosmological

[1] *Le Rôle d'Analogie en Théologie Dogmatique* (Paris, 1931), p. 93.
[2] *Ibid.*, 4 pp. 188–189.
[3] *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Vol. I, p. 142 (4th ed., 1925).

intuition', we might be suspected of Ontologism, of claiming a 'vision' of God. Yet nothing of the sort would be intended. Our knowledge of God is in a real sense indirect—that is, it is indirectly reached. It is based on creatures; the movement of thought begins with them. But the movement, like its term, is unique. It does not much matter what we call it, once all this is acknowledged. These conclusions are gaining currency. 'Emphasis on the intuitive rather than the discursive approach to the proofs is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of much of the best recent work in natural theology.'[1]

10. *The law of Knowledge*

The law of knowledge is that it should lay hold on God. Or rather it is the law of man that God should lay hold on him. Our knowledge of God is the true subject-matter of philosophy. We have only to free the fact of knowledge from the confusion in which philosophers have involved it to realise its full implications. The fact, after all, has been pretty plain for most generations on this planet; a widespread failure to see its bearing is peculiar to the present period of social chaos. Attempts to answer this greatest question as though it could be worked out in parts like a sum only encourage agnosticism.

If there is no God, then truth means nothing—nothing is necessary, there are no laws and no universals.[2] That absolute character which attaches to universals, that timelessness in them which so puzzles philosophers, is either a pure illusion (and that means closing our eyes to the facts) or a production of our own minds (and that means contradicting the facts) or an awareness of God's eternal creative power.[3] But it is not only the universal which shows this to us. Necessity and contingence are involved in the simplest statement. We may call facts 'contingent'—but we

[1] Peter Stubbs in *The Dublin Review*, July 1945, p. 81. So also J. Maritain in *Blackfriars*. May 1948, p. 219.

[2] The power to 'universalize' is a property of the intellect, the 'faculty of being'. What distinguishes us from the brutes, we may now conclude, is the possession of this faculty, not merely the power to recognize common characters as common. The brutes may have some dim form of self-knowledge, but they emerge from the dark background of unconsciousness only in so far as this serves their limited needs. The law of our knowledge is shortcircuited in them.

[3] This is not to say (with the Ontologists) that universals are not really distinct from God *a parte rei*.

are certain of some facts; and thus it is necessary that I exist, in the sense that it cannot now otherwise be than that I have being. I am not necessity, yet it is present to me. God has created me and conserves me. To reach this conclusion much clearing of ground may be necessary for particular minds and much analogical discourse. But it all comes to this in the end.

The following passage from P. Maréchal, although its language is somewhat special, urges the same fundamental conclusion: 'The principle of identity expresses in the most general terms possible the necessary synthesis of the *quod* and the *quo*, of existence and essence; it signifies, at bottom, that all being, in so far as being, is "intelligible". But here we must repeat a remark. . . . As our concepts directly represent only material quiddities, the subject and the predicate of the principle of identity bring into operation a notion of *being* weighed down by a relation to material *supposita*; the first principle, therefore, is itself revealed to our intelligence only in a *concretive synthesis* and in virtue of this demands *temporal* determination . . . The connotation of time underlined in the usual formula of the principle of contradiction (what is cannot not be at the same time and under the same respect) is thus required by the "proper mode of representation" of our concepts . . . it becomes superfluous when the objects signified by our concepts are themselves free from all temporal diversity, that is, live in a sort of permanent present . . . But let us leave this concretive duality which the principle of identity borrows from the material imperfection of our concepts; even in its purely rational significance, as we were showing above, it presents a logical structure which is clearly synthetic, since it affirms the necessary unity of all being with its intelligible essence. But how then does it acquire an absolute necessity? For no synthesis is necessary of itself; since diversity, as such, cannot be the principle of its own unification, the necessity of a synthesis must have its source in the necessity of a unity where there is no diversity of synthetic terms. Now in the principle of identity we possess already the type of the most general synthetic unity possible: *establishment* in being and *determination* as essence, or being as *Reality* and being as *Idea*. This unity is still a duality and therefore it is not justified of itself. What superior unity—implicitly imposing its purely original necessity—could logically ground so universal a synthesis? There is only one: the perfect unity in which *Existence* and *Essence* are confounded, in which

Thought and the Real are wholly identified; in short the unity of the pure Act of Being . . .'[1]

We therefore state the essential law of knowledge when we say that it is the 'faculty of being'. It is because God is present to us—in the unique relation of our passivity to his action—that we can know him. Knowledge reveals an object 'within' the subject—that is, though acting upon it (and so heterogeneous), yet at the same time immanent to it and so causing its proper perfection. Knowledge itself is the subject's immanent act; but the subject as knowing is 'specified', made what it is, by the object. This is the fact which faces us when we begin to think about knowledge in the most general way. It still faces us at the end of all our analysis, but we realize then that it is an ultimate, that we can only *accept* it on pain of flying in the face of reality. We know 'things' in so far as present to us; there is a union between ourselves and them such that we are in respect of this union indistinguishable from them. Yet it is no less essential to our knowledge that subject and object should be distinguishable as this substance and that. We should not be surprised, then, to find that our union with God has these same features. He makes us what we are, but we are ourselves and not he. His action is simply himself, but the term of his action is different from him. Our knowledge of him is *our* knowledge, not his, but yet he himself is the term of our knowing.

Knowledge of 'things' and knowledge of God are not merely parallel. 'Things' are not God, but his creatures, and as such they act on us. We know them as acting thus, and we know ourselves as acted on by them, and so we know God as acting through them and through the act by which we know both them and ourselves. The knowledge of God in his action upon us is the *final* law of our whole experience.[2]

[1] *Point de départ de la Métaphysique,* Cahier V (Museum Lessianum, Louvain, 1926), pp. 432–433. P. Maréchal says later (p. 453): 'But we must add on pain of slipping into an Ontological intuitionism, that this transcendent affirmation, the dynamic condition constitutive of the object thought, has nothing in common with a "vision of objects in God" or an "innate idea", even if only "virtual" in the Cartesian sense. It is purely implicit and "exercised" in the apperception of finite objects, and cannot be made explicit save dialectically, by reflexion and analysis.'

[2] A little book by P. de Lubac, S.J., provides a striking confirmation of this thesis: 'Prior to all consciousness, apart from any concept, arising from the very roots of being and of thought, springs the necessary affirmation of God . . . But

We may now sum up. Human awareness reveals itself as conditioned by the use of extended organs; without them it cannot begin its life. But they are only its instruments. Although we need bodies for our purposes, we belong to the world of spirits. We are minds, intellects—but not 'pure' intellects; we do not just 'enjoy' reality, but have to make a conquest of it. Pure Being, Infinite Reality, declares itself to us as the source and goal of the intellect and of that sensible world in which human intellects start their unending quest. This is the answer of Christian metaphysics to the question: What is the scope of man's knowledge?

to reach the level of consciousness, this fundamental affirmation must necessarily acquire an objective form . . . A process which leads us to other beings or other truths, could not, of itself and as such, lead us to him. But apart from all dialectic and all representation, our minds invincibly affirm him who is beyond all representation and all dialectic . . . This world is thus the obverse through which the reverse of the divine Being and Life must be glimpsed . . . It is the symbol or the sign of God . . . If the glance of the mind stops short at the world's crust, the fault is in our eyesight . . . Such a knowledge, though mediate, has nevertheless some right to be called, in its way, direct. *Contuitio,* we might say, to borrow a word from St. Augustine . . . An altogether concrete knowledge, this, because it is that of a presence . . .' *De la Connaissance de Dieu* (Editions du Témoignage Chrétien, 1941), pp. 57–62.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL CERTAINTY

CHAPTER I

FROM PHILOSOPHY TO THEOLOGY

1. *The notion of the supernatural; supernatural knowledge*

The act of faith, which is the subject of this second part, is supernatural. Before we approach it directly something must be said about the relations between philosophy and theology, the science of the supernatural. And first we must discuss what ought to be meant by 'the supernatural'.

In the last chapter reference was made to P. de Lubac's booklet *De la Connaissance de Dieu*. It will be a convenient approach to the present subject to observe at what point he introduces it. We have seen that the affirmation of God's existence, in his account, is necessary—that is, 'it is one with the very life of the thinking being,'[1] but it needs to clothe itself in conceptual form in order to reach the level of consciousness. 'The concept', says P. de Lubac, 'is a necessary instrument for all human thought, but no less necessarily a deficient one.'[2] 'Conceptual thought', the last chapter concluded, refers to our piece-meal knowledge of things; we do not seize the whole reality of our objects in a flash, but find in them, combined in a unique way, characters which are common to them and to other things. We may agree, then, with P. de Lubac, that a method of knowledge which proceeds by abstracting common characters cannot of itself reveal God to us. As he puts it, 'if there is a knowledge of God, this can be in the last analysis only by a revelation of God.'[3] Our knowledge of God is based on 'concepts' in a way which has been already described, but it is not contained in them. Yet when we try to get beyond our concepts, P. de Lubac goes on to say, our affirmation of God seems to be without content and we are tempted to atheism—only to find it impossible. 'It is then that the gift of God intervenes—the second gift, for the first was the mind (*esprit*), the affirmation itself. This alone saves us from Scylla without letting us fall into Charybdis, because it is of "another order, supernatural".'[4]

Thus, with a phrase from Pascal, P. de Lubac effects a transition from philosophy to theology. Does this mean that we were

[1] p. 57. [2] *Ibid.* [3] p. 50. [4] p. 58.

theologizing in the last chapter when the claim was made to a genuine *knowledge* of God? It might seem so. For P. de Lubac continues: 'it is the life of charity which, by really identifying[1] us with God, gives our idea of God spiritual content. It gives us "a new dimension".' How can an idea without spiritual content give us *knowledge* of God? Yet we must not understand P. de Lubac to mean that without grace we can have *no* knowledge of God, for it is the teaching of the Catholic Church, clearly expressed by the Vatican Council, that we can know God by the mind's *natural* light. (In fact, we may think, no one who gains this knowledge will not gain grace also, if he is willing to receive it. That is another question.) P. de Lubac has already told us that 'the first gift of God was the mind, the affirmation itself'. This affirmation, then, we must say, does become explicit, it is a *knowledge*, but a knowledge which cannot be contented with itself. It is a knowledge which, to repeat P. Maréchal's phrase, is still in quest of its intuition, of that intuition for which man has been created.

Man has a supernatural end, an end which he must *choose*. This is the key to P. de Lubac's meaning.[2] Man's choice is at the same time the entering into a supernatural relationship with God. God offers this relationship, in other words, and, unless *we* refuse it, *he* establishes it. To say that it is a supernatural relationship does not mean that a fresh nature is added on to one already constituted; it means that man's nature is itself ordered to this relationship but that it is not in man's power to establish it. The establishment of it is God's 'second gift'. Thus we may call 'supernatural knowledge' the knowledge which arises when this relationship has been established, natural knowledge the knowledge which man's power to choose the relationship presupposes. For, if man is to choose his end, he must have knowledge of it. Nevertheless this is a knowledge in which there can be no final resting. It is only a stage towards the acceptance (or the rejection) of the sole, supernatural, end. The natural knowledge of

[1] This is not to be understood of *substantial* identification.

[2] In his latest book *Surnaturel* (Aubier, 1946) he provides what will perhaps prove to be the definitive solution of the long theological controversy about man's natural desire for the supernatural. His conclusion is that it is not only legitimate but necessary to assert this 'natural desire'. (The following paragraph is based on *Surnaturel*.) '*La question de l'exigence ne se pose pas*', he writes (p. 487) in answer to the common objection. This needed saying long ago.

God arises, therefore, of necessity; it is God's summons, his offer of the supernatural relationship. We may deny him—that is, we may fight against his pressure. Or we may accept him and then we are empowered to know him with a personal intimacy. The knowledge of God to which we are called is a knowledge which can arise only on the condition of our self-surrender. *Da mihi amantem et sentit quod dico.*

The distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge of God may be indicated perhaps in a more concrete way. In the natural form of knowledge God is known 'behind' our concepts of created perfections; we acknowledge him, but we are not interested in him save as the explanation of phenomena. When he offers to lead us forward, if we do not accept, we draw back, and do our best to run away from him. But if we do accept, we are diverting our interest from phenomena to *him*. He offers us the power to know him not in terms of other things but in himself. We must pay the price, but it is for this that we were made and this that we *desire*. 'Identically blessedness is service, vision is adoration, liberty is dependence, possession is ecstasy.'[1]

In one sense all knowledge of God is non-conceptual. But in another we may call natural knowledge conceptual as compared with supernatural. For in the former our concepts fill the foreground, and God is only in the background; in the latter God moves, as it were, into the foreground. Thus we may also call the former non-intuitional, and the latter intuitional. There is much to be said later about supernatural knowledge. Here it has been touched on to bring out in a concrete fashion the relation between the natural and the supernatural. This has shown that the supernatural is not just an excrescence upon the natural; it is that to which the natural is essentially, intrinsically, ordered. But we must stand back and view this notion more widely.

2. *The notion of the supernatural: a wider context*

We are not invited to accept a sort of patchwork as God's design for rational animals, to imagine him as making a first draft and then improving on it. It is 'natural' to us to hear God's summons to our 'supernatural' end. But we are still men, still have our human natures, if we reject his summons. Our acceptance of it is (convertibly) God's 'elevation' of our natures towards their

[1] *Surnaturel*, p. 492.

single end. There are two metaphysical principles involved in this account. The first is that no creature can have the vision of God as his *innate* endowment; he must attain it and attain it freely. The second is that man's free act is caused by God no less than any other event; by calling it man's free act we mean that it is attributable to man as God's gift to him and that it is *refusable* by him. We thus encounter 'a negative and deficient primary cause'[1] in the will's freedom of choice. Sin refers to 'an absence of act in which created freedom has the initiative'.[2]

We can avoid those actions which cause disorder in God's world only by doing those which enhance its order; sin is the rejection of God's 'ordering' action on us. Even the actions which cause disorder are caused by him in so far as *actions*; evil lies in their deficient result, in so far as deficient, and in the will which rejects God's action in so far as refusing to act in conformity with right reason. This absence of act for which we are responsible is mysterious, but simply because it is absence of act it cannot be reduced to God's causality. To say that 'God permits sin' is to say no more than that he is the Creator and that we can sometimes obstruct the effect which his action would otherwise have caused. This raises no fresh question about the relation itself in which we stand to him. And there can be none—always he is simply the Agent, *Actus Purus*. Moral evil, in fact, presents an obstruction to thought only when it is conceived of as

[1] Maritain, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1942), p. 26.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 32. The common Thomist appeal for an explanation to the divine 'decrees' which 'permit' man's sin seems to cause needless confusion. In reviewing M. Maritain's lecture referred to above I remarked that his interpretation of St. Thomas was 'an immense satisfaction for those of us who regard with almost equal horror the anti-metaphysical rejection of efficacious grace, and the contradiction implied by the official Thomist view of it, implying as it does the doctrine of negative reprobation'. (*The Dublin Review*, April 1943, p. 176; for the doctrine of negative reprobation in explicit form—the withdrawal of God's grace as the requisite prelude for sin—*v.* Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Deo Uno*, pp. 543–548.) A Dominican reviewing the same lecture and commenting on these remarks (in *Blackfriars* the following August) expressed surprise that any writer should put forward the doctrine of the *causa deficiens* as anything but a regular Thomist thesis. He had apparently overlooked the main point of the criticism—namely, that this familiar thesis is not consistently applied to the Predestination question by such a writer as P. Garrigou-Lagrange, who raises an unreal problem by his doctrine of God's withdrawal of grace.

forming a positive part of God's providential arrangements. The possibility of moral evil must be a concomitant of our created freedom. If we hold fast to the evidence, which shows us God as the transcendent Positive, we see that moral evil itself is mysterious simply because it is negative, an *absence* of act. This shows at the same time that it is irrational to expect any further explanation of it. To expect any detailed explanation of what is called 'physical evil' is no less irrational, for it is claiming a share in God's own knowledge.

In the light of these principles we may now set the notion of the supernatural in a wider context.

If we accept a particular theological thesis (that of Duns Scotus), the Incarnation, apart from Adam's sin, was that event 'to which the whole creation moves'; grace was to flow, backwards as well as forwards through the ages, from the God-Man, whether or not Adam rejected it. Christ would have made us God's adopted sons whether or not our sins would cause his death, making him live a life in sin's conditions. We did not lose our supernatural *end* when Adam sinned. What we did lose in Adam was God's first offer, appealing to Adam's responsibility and spurned by him, that we should have his grace as an inheritance. The beauty of this plan involved a risk. God's offer was that grace should be passed on from a sinless father to his children. It could not be passed on by a sinful father. Now we must struggle for it against our sins, entering through Christ into his own inheritance. We owe it now not only to his life but to his death, the answer of man's sin to divine innocence, the triumph at the same time of his obedience, of his work as man. To join us to him, he had to lead our life and, as it proved, that meant to die our death. We never lost our supernatural *end* because Christ saved us at his own life's price. But we can gain it only by gaining him. We *have* lost grace until we find it in him; but it has always been possible to find it in him. The end has always been proposed for every man, though men may reject it.

Man's choice of his end is not the affair of a moment. The angels, it seems, in one irrevocable act chose heaven or hell. They are pure spirits, and not subject to the delays of our compounded nature. We, when we first choose God, receive not the end itself but a first instalment of it, and as a rule so unobtrusive an instalment that we are tempted to think of grace *in via* only as the

means to the end. We belong to the world of time, and our trial takes place in time. We are brought to our end by a developing process with which we co-operate more or less fully (in other words, which we are usually obstructing in some measure), or which we atrophy and—it may be—undo and annihilate. We have more chances either way than the angels; not that there is any question of envying angels—for we have *human* desires to satisfy. We have a foot in each of two worlds, the world of 'matter' and that of spiritual realities. Our peculiar function, in God's scheme of things, is to be a link between two levels in creation, angels above and the sense-world beneath. We have our roots in the extended world but these alone do not account for us. Our end is the true knowledge which is also true love. Our 'supernatural' life is the *inchoatio vitae aeternae*.

3. *The door to the supernatural*

Faith is the door to the supernatural, and there are some general remarks about it to be made in this chapter. The first act of faith in the traditional account of it is a first acceptance of the supernatural end and at the same time an acceptance of doctrine from an ecclesiastical authority. It is a part of revelation, something included within its content, that we may be assured in certain circumstances of the trustworthiness of Conciliar or Papal utterances. In that sense we ground our acceptance of doctrine on these utterances. We accept them as truths of faith in the light of an original divine communication to ourselves. There is no question of accepting doctrine on the mere authority of human teachers; any authority that they may have must be derivative.

We must now face the difficulty that faith is necessary to salvation and yet (apparently) is not possessed by many through no fault of theirs. 'Although for us', answers Père M. G. Congar, 'the one and only Church is the visible Catholic Church, we know that outside her visible membership there are souls which belong to Jesus Christ. There are multitudes of baptized and countless spiritual and holy souls in other Christian communions. We believe that even among the heathen there are members of the mystical Body. . . .'[1] He adds in a footnote: 'We do not, of course, mean that the heathen are saved, *as such*, for faith is necessary to

[1] *Divided Christendom*, the English trans. of *Chrétiens Désunis* (Centenary Press), p. 232.

salvation. A Moslem or a pagan who is justified by God, is, to that extent, no longer an unbeliever, even though he does not formulate his faith nor express it externally; he is a member of Jesus Christ whose soul is vitalized by supernatural faith and charity.'

It seems, then, that there can be faith without a recognition of an ecclesiastical authority. Some who claim faith would deny that faith carries with it such a recognition; in their eyes the certainty which the traditional theologians claim in regard to such a recognition would not be a true certainty.[1] The traditional theologians, on the other hand, must say that faith is in some sense incomplete without the recognition. Can this be made out? Can faith be thus imperfect? We may perhaps find an answer if we now introduce the subject of faith's 'preamble', the exercise of the discursive reason which is the regular prelude to the act of faith. God does not reveal supernatural truth in a burst of illumination wholly unheralded on the natural level; such a method, at least, is at variance with the orderly and gradual processes with which we are familiar in our universe. If there is ignorance of valid claims to ecclesiastical authority or of the true grounds of those claims or an inherited prejudice against them, we need not expect to find acceptance of them forced, as it were, from barren soil. There may be true faith even though the Church is not revealed by it as God's witness.

The topic of the 'preamble' leads us to a further conclusion about the relation between natural and supernatural knowledge. Supernatural knowledge has been described as intuitional, natural knowledge as non-intuitional. Thus the exercise of the discursive reason will be a mode of knowledge which arises on the natural level, the stage which precedes the first acceptance of the supernatural. A knowledge which is only discursive and non-intuitional is not to be described as supernatural. Thus a purely natural knowledge of God (supposing that we could isolate an actual case of it) would not become supernatural (would not, in other words, become faith) if there were added to it a purely rational certainty,

[1] This is not the place for discussing the difficulties which attach to the abandonment of the traditional view. But we may note in passing that those who do abandon it usually fight shy of the whole subject of certainty. Faith is, for them, as a rule a 'moral attitude' which has no discoverable relation with intellectual apprehensions. Undoubtedly faith is conditioned by a 'moral attitude'; but its supernatural certainty has further implications, and it is with these that we shall be concerned.

a certainty (that is) based on a purely discursive process, that God had revealed himself to man in Christ and his Church. And it will be argued later that faith implies in its pure form not only a supernatural knowledge of God but a supernatural knowledge of him *as declaring to us* that he has so revealed himself. For the moment we are more concerned to note that rational discourse does not come to a stop when once the supernatural has been accepted. God gives us in this life only a beginning of the end. He reveals his Church to us; and we receive from her the truths of faith on his authority. But we do not *comprehend* these truths, although the light of faith fits us to penetrate their meaning more and more. We are still on our trial, and we receive these truths in the dispersed and piecemeal form of human utterance. They are adapted to the natural discursive mode of knowledge, and we must use this mode to fit them together, and to explore the richness of their potentialities. This is the work of speculative theology which will be our next subject.

But we may pause here for a moment to notice the interlocking of these two modes, the mutual support which they give one another. They are not enclosed in sealed compartments. The rational mode explores faith's content—*fides quaerens intellectum*. But also, in the reverse direction, the gift of supernatural life perfects the rational mode in its own sphere. It is always the same intellect which is at grips with reality. The lower mode stands to the higher in a relation of finality, and the higher mode succours the weakness of the lower, repairs the ravages which sin has wrought on 'nature' itself. Faith's 'preamble' is not shut off from faith's influence. Even here the higher mode stretches out, as it were, to the lower, infecting the lower with its virtue. Some exercise of rational discourse no doubt occurs in the 'preamble' unaccompanied by any acts of theological faith. But supernatural influence is not confined to the definitive giving of faith's certainty. It is always beckoning us, as Canon Masure has so eloquently insisted,[1] to the land for which we have 'no bark or sails'. The certainty of faith may seem at present a puzzling and unplausible business: but this section is only a first sketch of the later analyses.

4. *On Speculative Theology*

The rest of this book will be an exercise in speculative theology,

[1] *v.* his *L'Humanisme Chrétien* (Beauchesne, 1937), *passim*.

and it will be well to clear up, if possible, certain misunderstandings about it. There is hostility towards speculative theology in some quarters, and indifference in others. We cannot spend much time discussing the position of those who lay it down that the discursive reason can have no concern with the truths of faith and that speculative theology is therefore not a science at all. Reason, they say, has no business to criticize the content of intuition and is powerless to serve it. This is an objection to speculative theology which regularly contains implied in it a doctrine of 'Two Truths', an error of a peculiarly deadly kind, the forerunner, as the history of our civilization has shown, of a corroding scepticism. There is no incompatibility, on this view, between faith and reason, because there is separation—there is no need to bring the two fields into relation. This is obviously a temporary resting-place; from such a position the journey must be completed either to scepticism or to theology in its proper sense. Such a theory is an insecure refuge sought by the rationalist whose attacks upon theology have failed or by the spoiled theologian in search of an excuse. It is true that our accounts of divine things in human language must be called inadequate and that 'natural' truths may be called 'relative' or even (with proper safeguards) 'symbolic' in regard to supernatural truths. But this must mean that the accounts are true, though incomplete, and that the 'relativity' of natural truths to supernatural ones does not detract from the reality of the former, although it gives them a more profound significance.

If the very notion of truth does not show this form of theological liberalism as a mere confusing of the issues, history alone, it has been suggested, can show that the logic of human nature works inevitably against any scission of the human mind—human nature may be deceived for a time, but in the end it will inevitably slough off the supernatural, once loosened from the natural, like an old skin. But what does need to be noticed is that the scission often appears rather as an unrecognized postulate than as anything openly avowed, and sometimes in the most unexpected quarters. There is a tendency to allow such a postulate even among those who should have the best reasons for realizing its incoherence. There has been recently a welcome insistence on the need for Christian scholars to treat 'profane' studies with an undivided mind, that is, to bring their theological standards to bear upon them, and so bring them within the total framework of a Catholic

mentality. But the point here is that these standards themselves cannot be properly grasped if the mind is divided in its approach to them, unless, in other words, theology is *lived* (and not acknowledged merely) as the supreme science. To say that the truths of faith must be re-thought by every age does not mean merely that these truths must be assimilated by every age and not just learnt by rote; it means also that we may require to restore some emphasis which has been lost by previous generations or to make some emphasis which is really fresh, that is, to discover and develop implications, to awaken potentialities which were always there but latent. The origins of Thomism are a particularly striking illustration. The error of Modernism has made us chary—and rightly—of anything which suggests an alteration of the truth itself. But so long as anything remains to be explored (and it is obvious that very much remains), we must be prepared for new developments. There is nothing in this of 'progress' in the superstitious and material (or sentimental) sense; it is the law of the human mind working in the concrete of historical circumstance on the eternal.

An illustration of speculative theology is to be found in the previous section. There we found the necessity of faith and God's will to save in apparent conflict; and the solution was offered that faith must be allowed somehow and sometime to all men of good will.[1] The liberal theologian (even if he rejects ecclesiastical authority) might be willing to accept the terms of the problem as data of faith and to accept the solution. But he would have no business to do so, if he wished at the same time to maintain a theory of 'Two Truths'. The discursive reason, which he so sternly rules out of court when it leads to less attractive conclusions, has been at work in this instance even in placing the terms of the problem in *words*. It has been at work also (and this is the function of reason in theology which most closely concerns us) in drawing a conclusion from theological data by way of ordinary familiar inference. The result is a certain advance in knowledge about the content of faith itself.

The notion of theological progress may be brought out more clearly if we turn to the theory of *fides ecclesiastica* and disallow it. According to this theory we are obliged to yield absolute assent not only to the implications of revelation made explicit for us by

[1] 'Good will' must be taken seriously. The Gospel is urgent and exigent.

the infallible authority (itself authenticated by revelation), but also to propositions vouched for by that authority but not implicit in the original revelation. This theory shows a failure to grasp as the principle of dogmatic evolution the penetration of God's unchanging truth by human minds. Dogma itself does not develop; but our minds do in penetrating more and more into its meaning. The theory is going out of favour, but it is still found in textbooks. The rejection of it does not imply a 'minimist' view of infallibility—quite the contrary. What is rejected is the suggestion that the Church demands absolute assent to anything which is not implicit in revelation. Not only, then, must we assent when this is demanded of us, but we must do so *fide divina*—there is only one sort of faith and that is divine.[1]

Theology needs reason—and it needs metaphysics. The theologian, when he uses philosophy, remains on his theological eminence; he lives with the truths of faith, and philosophy serves them. But the eminence remains uncomfortably fog-bound if the services of philosophy are not accepted. Theology needs philosophy if it is to perform its own business. The fundamental distinction between these sciences must not blind us to their connexions. Theology is the queen of the sciences. But a philosopher may say 'I am a philosopher and not a theologian', and, although this is not a satisfactory state of affairs, it does make good sense; whereas the theologian who says 'I'm a theologian and not a philosopher' is talking nonsense. This leads us to consider the present state of theology.

5. *Theology today*

We all suffer, even in our theology, from the characteristically occidental vice of 'activism'; Thomism is not exempt from it. It is true that the first thing which strikes us when we look at the recent history of this subject is the enormous improvement in the situation during the past half-century; but this, when we see it against the general background, should cause us no complacency. Principles have been regained and methodology once more estab-

[1] For example, the Church is infallible in her official condemnation of a book as heretical (Jansenius is a case in point) in virtue of the *necessary connexion* of this dogmatic fact with the conservation of the *depositum fidei*. (Marin-Sola, *Evolution Homogène du Dogme Catholique*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, p. 462.)

lished;[1] much that was lost from patristic and mediaeval speculation has been put back into circulation, and has become more widely known outside the School. But the quality of our interest—in this country, at least—is too exclusively apologetical or even (sometimes) merely historical and too little metaphysical. Speculative debate is too often concerned with subsidiary questions which presuppose that wider issues have been already settled or that they never can be settled.

It seems probable that the historian of the future, looking back over many centuries of Christian thinking, will see a period stretching from the first age of Thomism to our own time as one of arrested development in speculative theology (a period of recoveries as well as setbacks, but a period lacking in substantial advances). There are signs that another great age of theology may be beginning, but the hope is illusory unless we maintain the proper standards of value in our everyday attitude to the supreme science. No doubt there is plenty of reason for concentration upon the study of casuistry in times when there are fresh complexities in human living, but the obvious need arises for striking some sort of balance between the development of the positive theological sciences, of exegesis, historical studies and the rest, and that regard for dogmatic theology without which these positive sciences themselves disintegrate. Nor can this regard be a mere recognition of dogma's normative and organizing function, for the regard for theological truth cannot be based on relative considerations, on anything less than its own absolute value. The highest spiritual issues are engaged in this.

To say that the theology of our time is still characterized (even though far less than recently) by a materialization, by an attention to mere particularities, may seem unreasonable. The questions, it will be said, which rise to prominence must be for the most part questions of detail and of application; we cannot expect dogmatic questions (at this date, at least) to be in vogue. But we are speaking of a mental attitude. Unless we are to take the potentialities of revelation as already actualized, its implications all worked out by earlier ages (and this would be scarcely credible, even if there were no unsettled controversies), a lack of interest in speculative theo-

[1] The historical study of theology, too, makes progress, and may have a revivifying effect upon speculation; this section must not be understood as decrying such historical study.

logy must always be deplorable. It would be unfair to complain that the England of the Catholic Revival has produced no theologian of the first rank; but it is distressing to see so much intelligence, capable (it would seem) of great achievement in theology, devoting itself to lesser ends, not only through pressure of circumstances and at the call of charity, but through inclination. We need suspect no deliberate refusals; it is rather, perhaps, that the mental atmosphere around us alienates us imperceptibly from studies which only thrive in other air. Then there are inveterate English prejudices to contend against; and within the Catholic body that form of anti-intellectualism which was condemned in 1870 is not drained away—it is loyally repudiated, but mental habits do not die at once even among the learned. Among the less reflective the process is still more retarded.

It will be said that special aptitudes are needed for interest in metaphysics; and some people are fond of saying that we can 'get to heaven' without them. A lack of interest in mere natural metaphysics is not the point; the point is that, even if we are incapable of supernatural metaphysics, we merely show our ignorance when we declare them arid, and, if we mean this statement absolutely, we show grave disorder in our whole outlook. The principle here is surely clear enough. However much material circumstances may engross us, our aim must be to bend them to the final purpose—the knowledge and love of God, not indeed for ourselves only but not to the exclusion of ourselves. Theology is knowledge (and so love) of God in a degree surpassed only by supernatural prayer; and we neglect our opportunities at our own peril. Mysticism, it will be argued later, is the knowledge of faith in an eminent mode; it is only in relation to that eminence that speculative theology sinks to the level of mere 'curiosity'. The greatest of the mystics (St. Teresa, for example) have been very clear on this. Mortification of the intellect makes sense only if it means the abandonment of lesser knowledge for the sake of greater. Mental sloth, a failure to use such capacities as we may have, is not a preparation for the mystic state. Just as it would be foolish to shut one's eyes to Christian evidences on the ground that the gift of faith is in God's hands, so also to neglect the natural working of the intellect on the truths of faith and to remain passive, waiting for them to be illuminated by a spark from heaven, would be to fall into a form of Quietism. If they should be so illuminated, well and good, and we may hope

and prepare for such a consummation. Behind all this lies the problem of love, of the relations in which love stands to knowledge. The following chapters, while maintaining the primacy of intellect, will have as a main theme that knowledge and love, when they are truly themselves, not only are indissoluble but advance *pari passu*.

There is more to be said about the present theological position. It is admitted pretty widely that the manuals need much improvement, that the presentation is often crude and unsympathetic, repulsive rather than attractive, and hardly calculated to 'assimilate' the student to his divine subject and to give him a love of it (though we must recognize that the writing of manuals is almost inevitably a rather thankless task and one of quite peculiar difficulty). But there is perhaps something more important to notice, and that is the general attitude betrayed in this literature towards the very notion of theology, its inner meaning and method. It is summed up in what may be called the cult of the *communis sententia*. Anyone who ventures to question one of these received opinions is rapped over the knuckles like a fractious member of an infant's school, unless he happens to be accredited already as a theologian; and even in that case his action is apt to be considered in poor taste. Certainly good reasons must be given for tilting against the views of the majority; but, equally, good reasons should be available for their defence, if they are to claim immunity. The common views of theologians on matters not infallibly defined have manifestly varied from age to age; for example, the common view on the essence of the Mass-Sacrifice is no longer what it was a century or so ago. We cannot expect the authority of a professor's chair to be inviolate; only divine faith, interpreted by an infallible authority, can make this claim. It is the business of the theologian to teach and the business of the layman to accept his teaching; the general principle is common-sense. But what makes a theologian?[1] Not in itself the sacrament of Holy Order, not even necessarily the professorial chair. A certain intelligence is a prerequisite, and this is not a clerical monopoly. The programme once laid down for laymen 'to hunt, to shoot, to entertain, and not to meddle with theology' is sometimes recalled for our amusement. But that old spirit is very far from dead.

[1] A theologian's authority derives from the Church's sanction of his teaching. We are concerned with the qualities which his work requires.

Only the Church can declare faith's content with divine authority and claim assent to it; the theological conclusions of individuals, however clearly they may see them as faith's implications, have not the infallible guarantee and cannot be imposed on others. God might reveal these implications to individuals, giving them a direct and personal guarantee; what he certainly does do, according to Catholic theology, is to guarantee the Church's authority in the matter. There is no question of minimizing this authority in the denial of *fides ecclesiastica*. But we may point to an affinity between this theory of faith, which needs to find no intelligible internal relation between revelation and infallible definitions, and a tendency to argue from the authority of theologians *in disputed questions* to the exclusion of metaphysical enquiry—hence what has been called the *scandalum eruditorum*. An authoritative view in matters not defined infallibly, a general opinion of theologians, is a criterion which has immense importance, especially if its ancestry is well established; no one in his senses would disregard it. But when theologians have misconceived their functions, we may be pardoned for a severer scrutiny of their pretensions; we may demand that they should 'show their workings' on a particular question. And we may be on our guard against browbeating methods which would constrain our intellects with empty threats and arbitrary denunciations. Disciplinary injunctions, from the proper quarters, are another matter.

Here the question of St. Thomas's authority demands a note. Catholic professors of theology and philosophy are obliged to teach the doctrines of St. Thomas; this means that they must make their students familiar with them and urge their value; but it does not mean that they are obliged to hold them in every case. To depart from them without sufficient reason is manifestly unjustifiable; but what is 'sufficient reason'? The fact, we shall be told, that reputable theologians hold other views. But is this a declaration that all justifiable criticism of St. Thomas has been made already, that there is nothing further to be said? If we all deliberately confine ourselves to finding out the meaning of St. Thomas and defending it, do we not misconceive the very nature of our subject? Has metaphysical enquiry become for us simply a matter of history? At least we may claim that when we ask questions about Thomist metaphysics we should be given metaphysical answers. The reason why we are obliged to give assent to anything must

always be that the thing is true—naturally accessible to our intellects, supernaturally revealed to them, or found implied in what has been revealed. It is not the part of individual Catholics to find these implications for themselves with supernatural safeguards against error; the Church is revealed to them as the one sure guide. But they are guided to results reached by an intelligible method, and a philosopher is rightly eager to think them out.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF FAITH

1. *The freedom of faith; introduction to the problem*

According to Catholic theology, an act of faith in God's revelation is supernatural but at the same time reasonable, it is a claim to certainty, but the certainty is 'free'. The problem is to reconcile these statements. It will be convenient to begin by considering what is meant here by a 'free' certainty. In one sense nearly all our certainties are 'free'. We are not free to doubt our own existence—we may deny that we exist, but the denial is only verbal: we are affirming our existence all the time. But we are free to disregard the evidence for all those commonsense certainties such as the certainty that Britain is an island. (To doubt about such things is almost—but not quite—impossible in practice. We should have to close our minds to the subject at an early age and keep them closed with great resolution whenever it cropped up.) This, though, is hardly what we should expect to be meant by a 'free' certainty.

What we should expect to be meant is a certainty which does not necessarily impose itself even upon a normal adult, and the certainty that Britain is an island does so impose itself. It might seem, then, that we must look for a class of certainties the evidence for which is not generally accessible. But this puts us at once into a difficulty. The evidence for revelation must be accessible for everybody, for faith is necessary to salvation and we cannot believe in the truths of faith unless we know that there has been a revelation. We may now suggest that the evidence, although accessible for everybody, is not so easily accessible as the evidence for the first class of certainties, and this seems a more promising line. Clearly there are special temptations to refuse the gift of faith. The evidence may be there all right, ready to stare us in the face, but it is less easily accessible in the sense that we have special reasons for not looking at it. It is not so pervasive as the evidence for Britain's insularity, and thus there is not the same psychological difficulty about ignoring it. Nevertheless, we shall only fail to see it if at some stage we deliberately turn from it—at some

stage, because it is a question of accepting or rejecting not just a single block of evidence but many blocks which gradually form a pattern.[1]

But there is another feature of this evidence which must be considered in the present connexion: we are free not only to refuse it in the first instance but also to lose it when once we have gained it. The gift of faith can be thrown away. The evidence is of such a sort that we can lose interest in it. Then it will gradually fade from our minds and we may deceive ourselves into thinking that we never had it. It thus becomes clear from the start that the evidence, although it does cause certainty (in other words, although it *is* evidence), has a peculiar lack of obviousness. This is a subject which will concern us throughout our enquiry.

It may help to clarify the present position if we consider what should be meant by the statement that the evidence for revelation is not coercive. The statement is sometimes made with the implication that the evidence cannot provide the mind with a genuine certainty. It is so good that it would be unreasonable to doubt it, but it is not *really* evidence of a fact. It is evidence of the high probability of a fact. And this is quite unsatisfactory. It implies that the Church requires only a 'pragmatic' certainty of revelation—which is false. The Church has declared that a high probability does not suffice, and this must mean not only that there must be no hesitation on the side of the subject, but also that there must be something objective which can cause, on certain conditions, genuine certainty. When we say that this evidence is not coercive we must mean no more than what we have said already: that it does not impose itself with the *same* inevitability as the evidence for Britain's insularity and that it can be rejected when once we have seen it. We can close our eyes to it not only to prevent it convincing us, but even when once we have been convinced.

Then there is sin. At the heart of sin is a refusal, a *not*-doing. So we cannot ascribe a *cause* to it. But it is a fact of experience which we cannot deny. A mistake is an indeliberate failure to stick to the evidence. Sin is a deliberate failure to *keep* the evidence. But the

[1] That is, in what appears to be the normal approach to faith. 'Perceiving a pattern' is not offered here as a full description of faith's certainty itself. It must be noted that we are concerned here and in what follows with the explicit recognition of the church's claims, not with the 'imperfect faith' discussed in the last chapter (§ 3).

evidence in itself is always coercive. In so far as we see it, it always convinces us.

There is no incompatibility between freedom and certainty. 'Even in our firmest certainties, the supreme prerogative of the mind, its liberty, is preserved when the object is one which is on a higher level than our own. This is still the case in the highest and firmest of all our certainties, that of God's existence. Indeed, here alone it is found in its plenitude. For the human mind, despite its provisional state of dispersion, is not fundamentally divided against itself. Its two powers of knowing with certainty and of freely willing are not to purchase the perfection of their acts at the cost of a diminution or a sort of subjection of one side by the other, as if free certainty could never be anything more than a semi-certainty and a semi-liberty; on the contrary, they intensify one another mutually in proportion as their object rises in the scale, and they tend to meet at a point. They are never so close as in the affirmation of God.'[1] This passage is relevant to the whole thesis which is to be defended in the following chapters, that the certainty of faith results from a supernatural knowledge of God as Revealer. The thesis will perhaps sound almost meaningless at this stage, and may remain so until the end of the book. It seems necessary to lead up to it by considering the present state of the problem.

We shall approach the present state of the problem in a useful way if we consider an objection which might be made to the treatment of faith which has been so far given. The objection takes the form of pointing out that the 'evidence of faith' has been referred to in an ambiguous way. There is evidence, it will be said, that there has been a revelation, but there is no evidence of the truths of faith themselves. Faith is the evidence of things which are not seen; faith itself is not evident. The apologetic arguments show us that the Church is commissioned to teach us the truth; and then faith, under the power of grace, accepts it. 'Under the power of grace,' we should interject; 'what does that mean?' At this point the objector will take one of two courses. If he is a certain kind of apologist he will say: 'Oh! yes, our conviction is not only rational but also somehow God's supernatural gift, but you can't expect me to say just what that is. God gives converts some kind of special help, no doubt, but this question of faith's certainty

[1] P. de Lubac, *De la Connaissance de Dieu*, p. 34.

had better be kept quite clear of that sort of thing. You just want to be hardheaded and honest.' If he is a certain kind of theologian, the objector will say: 'When it rests on the self-revelation of God, though it may be supported by evidence of the credibility of his spokesmen, my assent as such rests on no evidence at all, but on a blind mysterious act of my will, itself empowered to it by the grace and the power of God.' These are the words of Fr. Victor White.[1] It might appear, then, that the certainty of faith has no special *evidence* as its objective correlate over and above the apologetic arguments. Clearly we must look into this without further delay.

2. *The evidence of faith: the Dominican View*

We need not consider at length the apologist's objection to the proposal that faith's certainty results from a special presentation of evidence. It too obviously leaves out the Gospel—'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father.' And it is obvious that in fact *faith's* certainty does not arise merely from a rational examination of the Church's claim. In ordinary parlance faith refers to something more than intellectual honesty; it is not to be gained by an exercise of mere common sense, yet it does not require philosophical powers or a fund of scholarship. It is something that the simplest claim. A schoolboy's faith, judged by the infidel philosopher, is demonstrably unjustifiable. To accept his pastor's teaching is a prudent course; the philosopher will not complain of that. But he will observe that there is a claim to *certainty*, and that this lack of hesitancy on so complex a question cannot be, in the circumstances, more than a 'pragmatic' certainty—which is not to the purpose. If there *is* absolute certainty here, it seems that its origin must be of a peculiar character.

The theologian, whose objection we went on to consider, would accept whole-heartedly that last conclusion. But he will not accept our approach to the question of faith's *evidence*, as the quotation from Fr. Victor White has indicated. What, then, is Fr. Victor White's position? He seems to be saying that *faith* has no evidence, although it is faith which gives us certainty. This would be obscurantism. Can we take him to mean that the self-revelation of God is its own evidence? This would be most satisfactory. But

[1] *Blackfriars*, January 1937.

if we examine his view more closely, we shall not find that this result emerges. We have now to embark on a discussion of the usual Dominican view and to trace its source in St. Thomas. Earlier in the article mentioned above Fr. Victor writes: 'St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, describes faith as an adhesion to the First Truth, to Truth itself, to the absolute mind from conformity to which all truths are true. By Faith my mind is made one with the mind which is the source of all truths—it is itself, in a sense, divinized. Truths which I accept on the authority of God are certain with an absolute certainty which I cannot attain elsewhere.' This is more hopeful, but it is somewhat vague; and its effect is neutralized by the passage previously quoted. St. Thomas's language about union with God by faith is too general to give us any clear view of the matter. He tells us, for example, that 'faith is the beginning of eternal life'[1] and that theology is 'as it were a certain impression of the divine knowledge'[2] upon us and that we adhere by faith 'to the truth which dwells (*consistit*) in the Divine Knowledge'.[3] And Dom Aelred Graham, quoting these passages in a remarkable article,[4] speaks of the 'divine mind, First Truth, graciously presenting itself to the creaturely intelligence'. But this is an *obiter dictum* and its epistemological implications are not brought out.

If we turn to other passages in St. Thomas we shall see clearly why writers who base themselves on him show hesitations at the crucial point, and why, when they insist on the 'inevidence' of faith's object, they appeal to the will (in apparent isolation from intellect) for an explanation of faith's certainty. These positions are clearly marked in St. Thomas himself. There is the startling remark in an early work:[5] 'Faith has its certitude from something outside the *genus* of knowledge; it is in that of affection.' 'The intellect of the believer', he writes in the *Summa Theologica*,[6] 'is determined to a particular conclusion (*ad unum*) not by the reason but by the will.' What he means by *ad unum* has been made clear a few lines earlier, when he speaks of acts of intellect which reach one of two alternative conclusions (*ad unam partem*), though with the fear that the other may after all be true (the state of opinion—

[1] *S. Th.*, II, 4, 1. [2] *S. Th.*, I, 1, 3, ad 2. [3] *De Veritate*, Q.14, 8.

[4] *Clergy Review*, Dec. 1938. The article is an admirably clear account of the function of the apologetic arguments.

[5] *3 Sent.* d. 23, 2, 2, sol. 1, 2. [6] II, II, 2, 1 ad 3.

quod accidit opinanti).[1] It seems, then, that will causes a firm assent to evidence which is not of itself capable of producing it. The passage continues as follows, bearing this out: 'The act of faith contains a firm assent to a definite conclusion (*ad unam partem*) in which respect the believer ranks with one who has "science" [i.e. of propositions established by reason] or intelligence [i.e. of principles]; and yet his knowledge is not perfected by clear vision, in which respect he ranks with the doubter. . . .'

There are well-known parallel passages. It will be enough to consider the *locus classicus* of the *De Veritate* to which we have already referred.[2] St. Thomas is justifying St. Augustine's definition of belief as 'enquiry accompanied by assent' (*credere est cum assensione cogitare*). 'Sometimes', he says, 'the intellect cannot be determined to one of two opposed conclusions by the meanings of the terms themselves (as in the case of principles) nor in virtue of principles (as in the case of demonstrative conclusions); but it is determined by the will, which chooses to assent to a conclusion precisely on account of something which is sufficient to move the will, but not the intellect, that is, because it seems good and proper to assent to it . . . so we are moved to believe what we are told in so far as the reward of eternal life is promised to us, if we believe; and by this reward the will is moved to assent to what is said, although the intellect is not moved by anything which is understood.' St. Augustine is right, he concludes, because in faith enquiry and assent are found in conjunction, whereas 'in "science" enquiry leads to assent and assent gives rest (to the mind)'; but in faith 'assent is not caused by enquiry but by the will'. In spite of firm assent the mind is restless, because it is not brought to 'its proper term, which is the vision of something intelligible'. We may accept these last words as referring to the obscurity of faith. We may say that St. Thomas is speaking of our assent to the *truths* of faith on God's authority. But is not the authority of God, God the Revealer, 'something intelligible'? St. Thomas's answer seems either negative or, at best, not affirmative.

Thomists become highly indignant when they are accused of making faith into a 'wishful thinking'. This ancient objection, they tell us, only reveals the ignorance of the objector. It is true that the objection has been commonly urged by those who have an insufficient knowledge of the subject, so that it has been easy to

[1] *Loc. cit., in corp.* [2] Q.14, a. 1.

turn the tables on them. They have often misunderstood, for example, the place of the *praeambula fidei* in the Thomist system or that of the moral dispositions required for faith, thus offering convenient opportunities for changing the subject. Then it is urged by Thomists that the will applies the *intellect* in the act of faith, so that it is an *intellectual* act; but that does not explain how it can be supplied by *will* with an object such that a certain assent to it is justified. Again it is urged that Thomism rejects a 'faculty-psychology'; it does not intend to set up intellect and will as autonomous powers, for they are united in the human personality; they interlock, and St. Thomas has presented us with an unsurpassed account of their interdependence. His critics have not appreciated his subtlety. And so on. But it is no use; if intellect and will in the act of faith are to resume their normal functions, we must add something to St. Thomas's account.[1]

3. *The evidence of faith: P. Garrigou-Lagrange*

The modern Thomist theologian best known in this country is perhaps P. Garrigou-Lagrange. His *De Revelatione* may be called the official Thomist text-book on our subject, and it therefore requires a special scrutiny. The writers to whom we have already referred are using it.

We must first observe the following Thomist distinction: *what* we have to believe is whatever God has revealed, and, since what we believe relates to God, God himself in a sense is always the object of faith; but the *motive* of faith, that is, the motive which causes our assent, is the *authority* of God revealing.[2] It is this

[1] References to publications difficult of access are tiresome, but sometimes it is impossible to provide in any other way a means of checking general remarks. So here, as samples of the tendencies alleged, articles in French periodicals must be adduced. The *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* for 1910 may illustrate the method of irrelevance (P. Poulpiquet's article, 'Volonté et Foi', esp. pp. 455–459, where the objection that one cannot be certain of an 'inevident' object is simply by-passed). *Recherches de Science Religieuse* for Feb. 1939 may illustrate the more recent preoccupation with the unity of intellect and will in the soul's 'centre' ('Structure "Personelle" de la Foi', by J. Mouroux). This is a move in the required direction. Canon Mouroux writes of the 'interior summons' to faith in intellectualist language, and shows how much there is in St. Thomas to justify an interpretation of his doctrine which avoids an obscurantist 'voluntarism'; but the result, as we shall have occasion to see later, is inconclusive.

[2] *De Revelatione per Ecclesiam Catholicam proposita,* by P. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., Vol. I, pp. 437–443. References are to the second edition (Rome, Ferrari,

'motive' which is the 'object' for our purposes, for it is this that *legitimatizes* our assent to the doctrines of faith. The whole question will be: How can we *know* the divine authority, or (in other words) how can we have knowledge of God as our authority?

P. Garrigou-Lagrange constantly insists that the truths of faith are 'inevident'. We must add: 'except in the sense that God guarantees their truth—there must be *certainty* of the guarantee.' So when he refers to the 'inevidence' of the object to explain faith's freedom, we are not satisfied. For 'inevidence' does not mean just 'obscurity'. We must add that the object of faith, although it can be overlooked, can be certainly known. 'The assent of faith', P. Garrigou-Lagrange concludes, 'is absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*) more certain than a necessary natural assent, but in a sense (*secundum quid*) it is less certain.'[1] Does this help?

P. Garrigou-Lagrange explains that the assent is more certain in that it relies on Divine Truth, and less certain because it is less proportioned to our intellects. To the obvious objection that it is precisely our intellects which are in question, he replies that it is more certain in us but not as regards us (*in nobis, non vero quoad nos*), meaning by this that it causes a more firm assent, but does not cause proportionate 'satisfaction' to the intellect (*requiritur quod . . . magis illum satiet et quietet*). All this seems to confuse the meaning of certainty. An object may be hard to see; but we are either satisfied that we have seen it (are certain) or we are not. The issue is further complicated by a comparison between the certainty of 'intelligibles' and the certainty of material objects. The former is said to be *of itself* 'more certain'. But it is *we* who are certain or uncertain. The passage cannot refer merely to the dissatisfaction which we feel with the *slenderness* of our supernatural information.

We come now to a section in the *De Revelatione* which might seem likely to shed some further light. Under the heading: 'How

and Paris, Gabalda, 1921). This vast work of Thomist erudition provides a magnificent defence of faith's *essentially* supernatural character, and is from many points of view of the highest value. But it seems to presuppose that no improvements on St. Thomas's position are conceivable. The distinction mentioned above is, in technical terms, that between the formal object *quod* and the formal object *quo*. The doctrines of faith, which are all related to God and are believed as so related (*sub ratione Deitatis*), are the formal object *quod*; the authority of God on which we rely in believing them is the formal object *quo*.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 445-457 on St. Thomas, S.T. II, II, 4, 8.

must Revelation be known as the formal motive of faith?' the author proposes to show that we must have a 'supernatural knowledge' of it (*supernaturalis cognitio*). Some fifty pages follow in which it is shown in great detail that the act of faith must be essentially supernatural, but its function as an act of knowledge remains as obscure as ever. The motive of faith, we are told, is the First Truth, and it is *id quod et quo creditur* (the regular Thomist formula). We should expect this to mean that it is itself supernaturally known as well as being the means by which we assent (with the most perfect justification) to revealed doctrines (for it would then be known as revealing them to us). Belief would thus be intelligible as involving a genuine knowledge of the supreme Authority.[1] But no; the constant teaching of St. Thomas is that the supreme Authority itself is *believed,* and in no sense seen (*non visum sed creditum*). That 'belief' here does not mean 'obscure *knowledge*' becomes quite clear when we note the author's answers to objections. 'Although', he writes, 'divine revelation thus believed is obscure, there is no lack of rational credibility . . .'[2] This is to fall back on the apologetic evidence for the justification of faith's certainty. P. Garrigou-Lagrange seems to realize it, for he goes on at once to answer a similar objection by speaking of the mysteriousness of the light of faith, which we should 'need to have the beatific vision to understand as it is'; and this is to choose the other horn of the dilemma, the appeal to mystery at the precise point where the grasp of supernatural, *intelligible*, content is vital to the entire position.[3]

This disappointing conclusion to the section has dashed any hopes that might have been roused on the way by certain hints of better things; such hints are to be found in the long series of Thomist texts on the preceding pages. But they are only hints, and

[1] The notion of Christian faith, we are proposing, is a complex one. 'Faith refers both to our supernatural knowledge of God as Revealer and to the knowledge of the truths which we learn about him on his authority. If it be said that 'faith' means only knowledge *on* authority, the verbal point may be conceded; but it remains true that the justification of faith must be our supernatural knowledge *of* the authority, and it is natural to call this the 'knowledge of faith'.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 507.

[3] The author discourages us from pressing the question in St. Augustine's words '*valde remota est a sensibus haec schola in qua Deus auditur et docet . . . Nimium gratia ista secreta est*'. These words could be made the basis of a real answer.

sometimes show a tendency to make excessive claims in a vague way. For example, we have the famous text of St. Thomas's *In Boethium de Trinitate,*[1] in which the light of faith is said to be, as it were, a sealing (*quasi sigillatio quaedam*) of the First Truth on the mind, but it is immediately added that this acts upon the will rather (*magis*) than the intellect and no satisfactory interpretation of this doctrine is offered. So when St. Thomas in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel[2] takes over the language of St. John Chrysostom speaking of 'intelligible inspirations', we do not know just what to make of it. And when P. Garrigou-Lagrange takes over St. Thomas's recurrent theme that we are 'joined' to the Divine Knowledge, not only do we make the reserves which such language always requires of us, but we are unable to take it in any 'realist' sense.

A final quotation to illustrate these tendencies may be taken from the article in *Recherches de Science Religieuse*[3] already mentioned: 'Certainty means objective evidence and firm assent; I am *sure* of possessing the truth, because I *see* it. Faith is certain, so I am sure of possessing the truth; and yet I do not see it. How, then, comes this sureness? Because I am united to someone who sees. Faith is certain not because it carries with it *evidence of something seen,* but because it is *adhesion to a Person who sees.* This proposition is, for us, completely established. If what is essential in faith is not the fragmentary truths of faith but the person to whom we tend by way of these truths—*ille cujus dicto assentitur*—it is quite clear that our certitude is founded on him. For it is this Person, and he alone, who sees the truths, and can thus give our knowledge an absolute ground. As St. Thomas says in a formula of perfect precision: "Our unconditioned affirmation proceeds not from the vision of the believer, but from the vision of Him in whom we believe."[4] Faith is adhesion to the First Truth, that is to an infallible Person.' The attentive reader will have noted that the ground of this 'adhesion', which could only be a *knowledge* of the infallible Person, is nowhere mentioned. And we cannot take God's *own* vision literally as this ground without a fatal exaggeration. It must be *our* vision (however obscure) of the Revealer. Only in that sense can we safely speak of 'sharing' his vision.

[1] 3, 1, ad 4.
[2] *Lect.* vi.
[3] Feb. 1939, p. 83.
[4] *S. Th.*, I, 12, 13 ad 3.

4. *The evidence of faith: Dom Stolz and P. Chenu*

The late Dom Anselm Stolz has commented as follows on P. Garrigou-Lagrange's doctrine of faith's motive: 'This solution . . . seems to lead to a process *ad infinitum*. For if the authority of God revealing is believed, I must point to a further motive for this belief and so on; for if it is said to be believed for its own sake without any further motive, faith does not seem to be sufficiently reasonable.' This criticism has been often made, but usually by theologians who have no constructive proposals to offer. The interest of Dom Stolz's criticism lies in the fact that he accepts P. Garrigou-Lagrange's account of faith's supernatural character and holds that a further constructive proposal must be added to it. 'It must be vigorously maintained', he writes, 'that the motive of faith is *seen*, not believed.' What is seen is not the conclusion of a rational process but 'the authority of God revealing . . . seen supernaturally in the light of faith'. But his interpretation of this is hard to follow, for what is seen is subsequently described as a 'created effect', namely a proposition 'that the truth (of every doctrine) falls under the divine authority'.

Our supernatural knowledge of God's authority is indeed a 'created effect', but the object of it cannot be merely a proposition. This knowledge causes us to form a proposition, but it must be first a knowledge of the authority itself, that is, of God. Dom Stolz claims that the denial of the *visio Dei* (that is, of the Beatific Vision) does not carry with it the denial of all vision of his authority; there must, he says, be '*evidence of the motive*', and this is precisely the point. But he seems to have shrunk from the conclusion that God's authority cannot be distinguished from God himself. How could God convince us *supernaturally* of truths about himself without in some way communicating to us that Truth which is himself? He can show us reasons for believing the truths of faith in the shape of merely rational proofs of Christianity. But that is not the present point. What supernatural motive can he give us but his own word? How can we know that it *is* his word? How can we gain supernatural assurance without a supernatural object? And what would such an object be? *Solus Deus illabitur animae.*

Dom Stolz seems to conceive of the truths of faith as seen supernaturally in virtue of an intelligible light which is the *authority* of God (in some mysterious distinction from God himself) and is

itself an object of vision; for he quotes in his favour the well-known passage of the *de Veritate* in which St. Thomas, after saying that 'light is said to be visible because except by means of it nothing is seen',[1] applies this idea to the First Truth as the object of faith. But this is so unsatisfactory that Thomist commentators may be excused for not pressing it. The suggestion would be that we see an effect of God's authority in the truths of faith as we see an effect of the sun in visible objects. But how could the truths of faith contain God's authority and so supply us with the motive of faith if 'God's authority' is not itself a genuine object?[2] P. Gardeil, it is true, thinks that they can. He holds that we can perceive a supernatural effect as supernatural and with supernatural certainty without perceiving its supernatural cause *in itself* in any way.[3] Even if we were to grant that this is intelligible in regard to miracles, it would not help us in the present context. The motive of faith must be an object of super-rational knowledge. When St. Thomas tells us that we know the First Truth, which in itself is simple, in the form of complex propositions (*componendo et dividendo*),[4] this cannot be the full story. He himself adds in the same article that 'the act of the believer terminates not in the dogmatic proposition but in the (divine) thing (which it humanly expresses)'.

P. Chenu, who thus translates St. Thomas's words, comments upon them: 'hence faith's realism which is the foundation of its mystic value.'[5] This is a very encouraging remark, and there are others in the same context. Theology, P. Chenu tells us, comes to birth in the 'radical appetite', by which he means the very depth of the soul. 'The dogmatic formula is not only a juridical declaration determining the mind's obedience; it has a religious value, incarnate in its concepts, through which the mind's subsequent travail can remain in communion with God revealing. . . . All the

[1] 14, 8, ad 4.

[2] Dom Stolz has dealt with the subject in his *Glaubensgnade und Glaubenslicht nach Thomas von Aquin* (Herder, Rome 1933, esp. pp. 109f.), to which the reader is referred for further details of his position. The quotations given above are from unpublished notes.

[3] *La Crédibilité et l' Apologétique* (Gabalda, 3rd ed. 1928), p. 91.

[4] *S. Th.* II, II, 1, 2.

[5] *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* ('Position de la Théologie,' 1935). The quotations which follow are taken from this article. P. Chenu may be described as the successor of P. Gardeil among the French Dominicans.

value of this travail will proceed from its religious informing (*animation*), from the "light" of faith, and the play of concepts will be affected by an increasing relativity.' Nevertheless 'because faith is human knowledge, it takes on the forms of the human mind . . . To exclude God from this natural law . . . on the pretext that he is transcendent or that he reveals himself is to yield at the outset to the spiritual disorder of a false mysticism'. This passage seems to mark a reversion to type; in what follows the object of faith is reduced in effect to the propositions of faith, and a supernatural mode of knowledge is explicitly rejected.

We cannot claim, then, unequivocal support from P. Chenu, but we may take over from him a useful hint. We may suggest that the doctrines of faith, in their conceptual expression, are what we know about God on God's authority. They give an analogical 'knowledge by description' (which he authenticates *in globo* when he authenticates his Church). But 'knowledge by description' requires some 'knowledge by acquaintance' as its foundation, and this would be our knowledge of faith's motive (that is, of God revealing). It is in the light of this knowledge that the conceptualizations of theology gain their full meaning. The 'light of faith', bearing on the *Primum Analogatum*, must be our line on the true bearing of the analogies proposed by the dogmatic definitions. The Blessed Trinity is not in the light of faith 'three persons' in a mere human sense, because we attach the meaning of these words to the object of faith. Yet it is only by means of such analogical formulas that we can penetrate the object more deeply and approximate more closely to the total meaning. There is an interplay of discursive thought and supernatural intuition.

5. *The Statement of the Problem*

The traditional Thomist account of faith has brought out the nature of the problem. The root of it is the reconciliation of faith's rational justification with its supernatural character. The traditional account recognizes that faith's certainty must be attributable to some supernatural working, but an anxiety to avoid speaking of supernatural *evidence* of any kind leads the theologians to adopt expedients which do not seem satisfactory and, in particular, to speak of a 'supernatural influx' upon the *will* which is not also and equally an influx upon the intellect. An attempt will be made later on to show that there is nothing opposed to orthodoxy or to ex-

perience in claiming that such an 'influx' does bear upon the intellect. For the present it must be enough to underline the difficulties which face us if we do not make that claim.

If we describe the effects of grace primarily in terms of the will, we shall find ourselves conceiving of the will as a sort of internal combustion engine which carries us towards God and of grace as a sort of extraordinary fuel. But it is not so simple as that. It is clear that there can be no movement of the will which is not the response to the attraction of an object; and that the object must first be presented to the intellect before it can exercise this attraction. We can diminish this attraction by our lack of attention—will has a 'negative priority' in that sense—but there can be no increase in the attraction of the will which is not at the same time an increased presentation to the intellect. But surely, it may be said, we can take a keener interest in an object without any corresponding increase in our knowledge of it. This sounds a reasonable position to adopt, but it does not stand the test of analysis. Even when the object is there all the time 'waiting to be known', our keener interest is caused by our increased knowledge of it. The object is so related to us in such a case that we shall know it *if* we are willing to do so and *if* our attention is not distracted from it. But there can be no question of unwillingness until there is an object presented to us. And our distracted attention can be concentrated on the object only in virtue of the object's power to hold it. We may reach the same conclusion in a more concrete way by saying that our love of God is always the result of his self-presentation to us. The result will not follow if we reject his offer. When it does follow, it is our attentive love or our loving attention; it is the act of our soul which both knows and loves. And what causes it is God's action upon our souls.

The relations between the intellect and the will raise many problems, some of which will concern us at later stages. What has been said so far may have shown at least that we must treat these faculties as interrelated more closely than the usual language of Thomism would seem to suggest. Even the mysterious 'negative power' to 'close down' on objects, although we naturally describe it in terms of will, is a closing of 'soul'. We may speak of the soul as intellective in so far as united with objects, and as dynamic in so far as stretching towards them. But the more we think of it in regard to that object for which it is made, the harder it is to make a clear-cut distinction.

It may be wise to refer without further delay to a certain proposition which was condemned by Pope Innocent XI. 'The will cannot bring it about,' it runs, 'that the assent of faith should be firmer in itself than the weight of the reasons urging assent would warrant.'[1] At first sight this might appear to be a dogmatic utterance imposing upon the belief of the faithful just that separation of will from intellect which we have been deploring. But when we examine the background of this condemnation, we find that the error condemned is not any psychological theory, but the attempt to explain faith's certainty in terms of the merely *rational* evidence. What is imposed on the belief of the faithful is simply that faith's certainty has an *extraordinary* explanation. It is not stated in so many words that it results from a 'supernatural influx'; but to anyone familiar with theological contexts it is quite obvious that this was in Pope Innocent's mind. He refers to the soul as 'will' in accordance with a certain theological convention which we are free to consider misleading and which we may even take as an index of philosophical inadequacy. Other dogmatic utterances which employ this language (and which might be urged as foreclosing the psychological issue) must be interpreted in the same way.

This condemnation, then, instead of obstructing our progress along the lines which have been sketched out, points authoritatively in the same general direction. We cannot say merely that we accept the Church's doctrines because we are rationally convinced that God is her author—for to doubt what you know to be God's word is simply irrational. To accept God's Revelation, by the assent of faith, must therefore involve some further factor. It is only to be expected that this further factor should require a more critical analysis in our day than it did in the time of St. Thomas or in that of Pope Innocent. The Thomist theory of faith was evolved when the fact of Revelation was not the burning question which it is now, and when general epistemology was in certain important respects far less developed. The problem for the modern theologian is to adapt that theory to new requirements without falling foul of dogmatic facts or of human experience.

The word 'experience' requires a note before we pass on. Faith, the theologians insist, is not an 'experience'. Assuredly it is not 'sensible devotion' or sense experience. Nor is it a direct awareness

[1] Denz. 1169.

of faith's truths. But there must always be 'experience' of certainty, if we take the word in its literal acceptation, freed from the vicious associations of Modernist theories or sentimental religiosity. We shall be told that the faithful claim no 'experience' even in the widest sense of the word. This is to forget that they do claim certainty, and certainty is not reducible to an attitude of the will, although that may be a condition for it; it must be an intellectual 'experience' caused by an intellectual object. The motive of faith must itself be known. That is, God the Revealer must himself be known by the light of faith. This light may be only a 'ray of darkness' as compared with the clarity of conceptual thinking. But it must be light if we *know* by faith that God has spoken. *What* he tells us may be intrinsically quite 'inevident': *that* he tells us must be experienced fact.

The reader will perhaps expect an immediate attempt to provide a detailed defence of this summary solution, for without this defence the problem remains. It must remain, however, until we have examined two recent interpretations of the Thomist theory which claim the allegiance of many theologians. It would not be reasonable to claim a hearing for a treatment which strikes unfamiliar notes unless it were shown that these other theories fail to account for faith's certainty. The next two chapters must be devoted to this.

CHAPTER III

BILLOT'S THEORY

5. *Cardinal Billot on faith's motive*

We have considered so far the account of faith's motive given by the Dominican School. It is time to realize that another account has had a great influence on Catholic theology during this century, one which is associated with the name of Cardinal Billot. The enquirer who turns to the current textbooks for an exposition of faith's motive will find as often as not that the theory recommended to him is that of this illustrious Jesuit. The problem is commonly treated as a dilemma, the two horns of which are represented by the theories of Suarez and de Lugo; the theory of which Billot is the most famous exponent is then offered as the means of escape. It will be useful to follow this procedure, and to postpone a direct treatment of Billot's theory until we have examined the context in which it is usually offered to us. For this purpose let us take as a basis a modern German textbook which received such general approval as to warrant translation into French, Mgr. Bartmann's *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*.[1] Under the heading 'knowledge of the formal object' the author presents the problem as follows: 'if everything has to be believed on the authority of God, how are we certain of this authority, and with a certainty such that this authority can support the supernatural act of faith, and the sum-total of all our acts of faith?' As a statement of the position this could hardly be clearer. 'If we reply', he continues, 'that it is "by natural knowledge", the supernatural character of the act is threatened [we should claim that a stronger word is needed]; if we require a supernatural knowledge, we preserve the supernatural character of the act, but we risk falling into an infinite regress. For this supernatural knowledge will require another as its condition and so on.' This last statement, which seems unjustified, is repeated time and again by the modern

[1] The translation, under the title of *Précis de Théologie Dogmatique*, is often met with in this country. The quotations which follow are made from it (pp. 75–76 in the second edition—*Éditions Salvator*, Mulhouse, 1935).

manualists. It becomes explicable when we realize that it is a criticism of Suarez (to whom Bartmann immediately turns for illustration), for Suarez holds in all essentials the view of the Dominican School which we have just examined, and the 'supernatural knowledge' in question is thus a belief which *lacks evidence* and is not knowledge at all. Bartmann himself quotes the words of Suarez: 'The Revelation of God who tells us the things of faith is itself to be believed by divine, infused faith.' In other words the formal object is '*quod et quo creditur*', in accordance with Thomist tradition.[1]

It follows, according to Suarez, that we do not, after all, *know* the object. The position therefore is that supernatural knowledge of the formal object (the only possible foundation, we have urged, for supernatural certainty) is ruled out by Bartmann from the start by the assumption that such supernatural knowledge involves a regress. But this is true only if we deprive this supernatural 'knowledge' of any 'evident' term. As we shall see, the burden of Bartmann's complaint is not that the traditional Thomists fail to supply an 'evident' object, but that they should make any pretence to do so. The tendency of much modern theological criticism is to accuse these Thomists of excess in raising the question of supernatural evidence at all; a few lines in condemnation of Suarez are considered sufficient to foreclose this approach to the problem. What *we* have called an 'excess' in the Dominican treatment, a vague claim to a participation in God's knowledge, is not even mentioned. There is some excuse for overlooking it, and the critics whom we are now considering have no interest in giving it a 'realist' meaning. Their principle is to reject unambiguously all supernatural evidence.

Bartmann then turns to the theory of de Lugo, and gives him a rather longer paragraph. In de Lugo 'the (rational) motives of credibility are introduced into faith itself'. Franzelin's version of the theory is given to sum it up: 'These witnesses are so many rays which make the divine word shine before us and show its divine origin.' That is the best showing that Bartmann can make for the theory. He quotes with apparent indulgence de Lugo's own remark that this 'concrete' awareness of Revelation is 'a trifle

[1] Garrigou-Lagrange had pointed out (*op. cit.*, p. 491) that this thesis is commonly attributed to Suarez by modern writers, although Suarez himself claims that it is Thomist. The habit continues.

obscure',[1] but he obviously feels the objection that faith then becomes an act of discursive reasoning, for he concludes the section with a paragraph twice the length of the previous two combined, in which the famous theory of non-discursive 'simple faith', popularized by Billot, is put before us. He realizes, that is, that de Lugo's theory cannot account for the supernatural character of faith except by describing in affective language a purely natural awareness that Revelation has occurred (coupled with the declaration that it must be supernatural, somehow, because the Church says so). The way out, he suggests,[2] is Billot's theory.

The following is a summary of this theory entirely in Bartmann's words (with certain omissions which do not affect the sense): 'The authority of God revealing is known only by the motives of credibility. The act of faith itself is not a discursive act. The authority of God is not kept as a material object of faith but as a motive of which one is already convinced. The motive of faith is the authority of God *in himself* and not the knowledge which we have of it. The will submits the intelligence to it immediately and completely. If I ask: "How do we know God?" my question bears not on the formal object of faith but on its previous conditions. It is the same with human faith. I believe a thesis maintained by St. Augustine or St. Thomas because of their authority, not for the reasons which enquiry can show in support of their thesis. But whence comes the supernatural character of faith's motive? Grace cannot produce it *objectively*. The answer is: the *knowledge* of God's authority is natural, but the authority of God is itself something supernatural.'

The reader not familiar with this theory may well rub his eyes. That Bartmann's account of it is not a parody will be shown by quotations from supporters of the theory which will be given

[1] De Lugo is regularly praised by modern authors of the sort now under consideration for having pointed out the flaw in the system of Suarez, and they take over from him the view that the evidence which intellectually *justifies* faith is in effect natural evidence. We shall consider a particular instance of this in the next chapter. It justifies faith, according to Billot, because it is already known before the act of faith; but the act of faith, Billot will say, does not *rest* upon it. What, then, we shall ask, does it rest upon? De Lugo's own theory is at the root of much modern writing, but his failure to give faith more than a nominally supernatural character goes much further back and can be traced to Scotus (Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 494).

[2] Bartmann is not claiming to adjudicate, but his sympathies are obvious.

later in this chapter. But it must be immediately obvious that to accept the statements quoted would be simply to *reject* the fundamental and inevitable question: What is the knowledge which justifies *faith's* certainty?

2. *The faith of 'simple authority'*

What we have to examine are the two special features of this theory, the appeal to 'human faith' as shedding light on divine faith, and the suggestion that the motive of faith is the authority of God not as known by us but in itself. The appeal to 'human faith' has not lacked criticism. It has been pointed out, for example, that we cannot prescind from the truth of the testimony in the act of faith and, with this precision made, adhere to God's authority, because God's authority involves the truth of the testimony by the strictest necessity. To appreciate the force of this criticism it will be necessary to have before us a more detailed illustration of the theory: 'The authority of the witness', writes Billot,[1] 'is one thing, and the truth of the testimony another. For authority in a witness is founded on the fact that his attestations are determined to truth by a constant and regular law on account of the perfections or "habits" of wisdom and truth with which he is endowed. But the truth of the testimony can be made known independently of the wisdom or virtue of the witness by circumstances of various kinds which attach to his testimony.' In other words, we can believe a witness just because he is who he is, and that is the faith of 'simple authority' which this theory recommends; or we can believe him because there is *evidence* that what he says is true, and that is a discursive process[2]—then we have the 'scientific faith' of de Lugo, which the new theory must avoid at all costs in order to make faith something different from mere reason. But the application of such a distinction to the act of divine faith is unserviceable, because the assent to God's authority is at the same time the recognition of his infallibility as a witness and this gives rise (discursively) to the conclusion. We may, indeed, speak of 'pinning our faith' on someone's authority when we have no evidence that what he tells us is true except that his earlier statements have proved reliable; but it is obvious that we should not then have certainty. An assent to an authority which

[1] *De virtutibus infusis* (3rd ed., Rome, 1921), p. 217.

[2] On the assumption, that is, that there is only natural evidence to consider.

has no known credentials, which is not in fact an authority, would be an act of unreason. We must have evidence that there *is* an authority.

It is this last point which we should have expected to be seized upon by critics of the theory, because it seems to invite the "mockery of the unfaithful" in the directest way. The criticism is true enough that, if once the motives of credibility have convinced us that God has spoken, we cannot possibly *abstract* from the truthfulness of God (which makes assent to the truths of faith a logical consequence) and adhere to the authority of God apart from his truthfulness, so as to make faith something more than 'logical'. But the most glaring fault in the theory is surely that it models our assent to God's authority on an assent to authority in human relationships which does not produce *certainty* at all. In so far as I prescind from the evidence that a testimony is true, I abandon the pretension to certainty. This seems axiomatic, yet the theory has been allowed to make rapid headway and, according to its own supporters, a sacred title may come to guard it from profane criticism—it might become the 'common opinion of theologians'. What is the explanation of this state of affairs? It is partly perhaps that the opponents of the theory do not press this question of certainty as rigorously as we might expect, in view of the proverb about residents in glass houses; but partly also because the theory, although its foundation is incompatible with certainty, tries to introduce it later as supernaturally injected into us in a way which is left conveniently vague. This, as we shall see, has commended itself as the best means of escape from the difficulty.

3. *P. Bainvel's account*

Before we pass on to the mysterious doctrine of faith's motive (the second of the two special features in the theory), we must pause to illustrate the 'faith of simple authority' from the work of P. Bainvel, S.J.[1] The book is summed up in the first appendix by a series of seven Latin propositions. The second may be translated as follows: 'Since there are two kinds of faith, one which is more closely related to science by reason of the evidence of truth seen in the witness (in this case we ourselves investigate the truth on

[1] His book has appeared in an American version to which the references are made (*Faith and the Act of Faith*, Herder, 1926).

another's testimony and pronounce upon it in virtue of reasons seen by our judgement—as with "historical faith"), and another by which we simply adhere to another's statements on the speaker's sole authority, the act of theological faith seems definitely to belong to the second category, for in this we judge that what God tells us is certainly true not from any evidence of the thing itself intrinsically or extrinsically (that is, in the witness himself), but solely upon the testimony of God revealing taken formally as such. Faith of this sort cannot be exercised on earth except by the free command of the will.'[1] This denial even of extrinsic evidence (in the witness himself) in the act of faith illustrates that illegitimate 'abstracting' from God's evident truthfulness which has already been pointed to as a flaw in the theory.

It is unnecessary to show how the theory is developed by P. Bainvel (we are asked to think of a child believing its mother simply because she is its mother, which is to describe an act of supernatural certainty in terms of an act of credulity). The baffling proposition quoted above must be enough to show the writer's general position. It is impossible that its final sentence should be understood in such a context except as a lapse into obscurantism. But to make clear that the writer allows faith no intellectual justification (save that of the merely natural evidence) we may quote finally from the note to his fifth proposition: 'the divine authority, *as a motive of faith*, is, strictly speaking, neither believed by faith or scientifically known. To understand this, one has but to analyze an act of human faith, and take as object for the analysis not scientific faith, but faith on simple authority.'[2] That faith has no intellectual justification, on this theory, save that of the apologetical proofs, the evidence accessible to the discursive reason, is further emphasized by the embarrassment shown by the theory's supporters when they try to explain the 'faith of the simple'. Mgr. van Noort, for example, who follows Billot closely, obviously feels that a natural certainty[3] must be established in all cases as a preliminary to an act of faith. It would be easy to show that he can establish only a 'pragmatic' certainty in the case of the 'simple'. It will be more interesting to show how he is forced out of his own position. 'Much', he says, 'must be attributed to divine grace, which . . . can bring it about that difficulties are eliminated . . . and that the motives of credibility are so proposed that they have force

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 138. [2] p. 140. [3] i.e. that Revelation has occurred.

and persuasion. . . .'[1] Does a boy of ten receive infused knowledge of apologetics? Doesn't his act of faith bear on an Object infinitely simple?

4. *P. Harent's account*

In turning at last to the mysterious account of faith's motive given by these modern writers we may deal at the same time with an objection which presented itself, no doubt, some pages back to the minds of those who are acquainted with this literature. Surely, they may have said to themselves, you cannot hope to treat this theory with any sort of justice without some mention of P. Harent's defence of it in the great *Dictionnaire* of Vacant and Mangenot,[2] especially since the writer has disallowed the appeal to 'simple faith' and yet retained the modern theory of faith's motive? So, then, we shall follow the version of this doctrine given in the *Dictionnaire* and thereby come to the end of the present matter. For if it could be shown that the theory has no explanation to offer even in P. Harent's account, we should be entitled to say no more about it. To attempt this in so short a space may seem at first the height of presumption, for the article in question, filling nearly five hundred columns, is the equivalent of a fair-sized book.[3] But the fact is that we may make a valid judgement on P. Harent's answer to our question about faith's certainty by considering only a few sentences in his treatise. His conclusion claims to be recommended by the prolonged examination of theological sources which has preceded it, but it is not necessary to cover any of this ground in order to seize the bearing of that conclusion; it can be stated in a few words and stands or falls on its own merits.

After giving an account of the system proposed by the Billot school, P. Harent observes: 'it seems to us that this last system on the analysis of faith, in its method of conceiving of the "authority of

[1] *De Fontibus Revelationis* (a work in common use), Amsterdam, 3rd ed., 1920, p. 199.

[2] *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Vol. 6 (1), 1920, art. 'Foi', by S. Harent, S. J.

[3] It is, in fact, unfortunate that it is not accessible in book form, for it is a highly distinguished piece of work. P. Bainvel, in the Preface to his own third edition, observes with justice that one could almost call it exhaustive, if the subject did not remain inexhaustible, and speaks of its 'vast erudition' and 'profound analysis'; it is odd that he should not have taken account of its strictures on his own theory.

God revealing" objectively and in itself, sufficiently answers all criticisms not by recourse to a general theory of belief on the word of another, but rather and above all by considering divine faith and the elements which are proper to it in the way which we are about to explain.'[1] A few lines above he has written: 'Criticism is levelled finally and above all at this fundamental point of the system that faith's formal object consists in the divine authority and divine revelation taken objectively in themselves, and not in subjective knowledge of these things . . .' It is plain, therefore, that P. Harent is proposing to deal with our present question.

To this end he addresses himself to the objection that a thing is only a formal object or motive in so far as known, in other words that the motive of faith must be itself a matter of evidence. This is our whole point. 'It is to enlarge the concept of a "formal object" too much, some one may object, to give this name to the divine attributes in so far as they produce or require in us an effect which we do not see, an infallibility in our act which does not fall under our consciousness. Must not the motive of an act be known, and cannot its influence and effect be known at least by reflexion?'[2] We should have supposed that the answer was inevitably 'yes'. But P. Harent replies: 'Let us make the true concept of "formal object" precise', and for this purpose quotes Gregory of Valentia as follows: 'For something to be the formal object of faith it is not sufficient that faith should *somehow* depend upon it: it is necessary that it should depend upon it as its (extrinsic) form, that is as its exemplar (archetype) . . . faith, in its infallibility and certitude, imitates divine revelation as its exemplar and model . . . as revelation is infallible in what it says, so it makes faith always infallible in its assent.' What we now want to know is how this 'exemplar', which is *ex hypothesi* not known, produces a certainty about the truths of faith over and above the certainty (or probability) of the natural evidence. The Dominicans said, as we saw, 'because the divine authority is itself believed'; P. Harent, rightly rejecting this answer, holds that the 'exemplar' produces its effect through intermediaries, as an architect's plan of a house determines it in a real sense but requires contractors, builders and so forth for the construction. 'So', he writes, 'the divine omnipotence, intervening immediately, will raise our intelligence to produce assent.'[3] But the 'raising' involves of itself no fresh object of knowledge, as we

[1] Col. 500. [2] Col. 503. [3] Col. 504.

see from what follows: 'the human will must also intervene under the influence of grace to produce this adhesion *super omnia* and this sovereign assurance which is measured by the divine authority or infallibility considered in itself.' The 'raising' of the intelligence is a concession to make the assent supernatural in accordance with the Church's definitions. It is simply admitted, not explained. Supernatural certainty is caused by the 'exemplar' acting on the *will.*

When we look back at certain positions taken up by P. Harent earlier in his article, it is clear that he is moving to some such unsatisfactory conclusion. As we saw in the first chapter of this book, he offers some valuable criticism of Scholastic views on certainty, but he accepts the common view that certainty can dispense with evidence. 'Evidence', he writes, 'is nothing but a certain *clarity* in the motive of affirmation; "infallibility" is a special assurance attaching to this motive, a necessary link which it has with the truth.'[1] But such a link is of no service to us unless we see it; and it is precisely this 'seeing' or evidence that we require in order to give a supernatural and certain assent to the truths of faith. The authority of God itself is necessarily linked with the truth; but it cannot, while it remains unknown to us, communicate supernatural 'infallibility' to our intelligences. And P. Harent says that it is unknown to us except by the natural motives of credibility. Supernatural assurance, then, must be an affair of the will or (which amounts to the same thing) something inexplicable; it has to be admitted as a part of Revelation—the Church teaches that there is such a thing as the 'light of faith', and so there must be, but we know nothing about its workings and need not trouble about them. The object of faith, God's authority, makes faith supernatural in some mysterious way, but we cannot be expected to explain how this should be so. This is what P. Harent seems to be saying.

5. *The Dominican and the Jesuit Schools compared*

This helps us to realize that the two schools, the Dominican and the Jesuit, although their conclusions may seem to be materially similar, are animated by very different spirits. The Dominican school has provided the materials for claiming not merely that there is a gap in the current analysis of faith but also that the *logical*

[1] Col. 208.

exigencies of the Thomist tradition lead us in a promising direction. The Jesuit school on the other hand has merely emphasized the gap. The fundamental reason for this is that the Jesuit tradition does not accept the *intrinsically* supernatural character of faith as an essential datum of the problem. It is enough if we can show that the object to which our faith refers is itself supernatural, and if we do not deny that there are some hidden supernatural effects on the relationship between the soul and God which is thus established. Thus the question of a *supernatural certainty* fades into the background. For the Dominicans, on the other hand, faith is the beginning of a supernatural life which involves the elevation of the soul's powers to acts which they are essentially incapable of producing by their own natural activity. The supernatural formal object requires on the subject's side a radical transformation of the whole being and so of the faculties.[1]

To illustrate the difference between the treatments of our question by P. Harent and P. Garrigou-Lagrange respectively, let us consider what they have to say about the invisibility of the act of faith. According to P. Harent[2] we can never know whether we are making an act of supernatural faith or not, because the supernatural itself does not fall under our 'experience'. This is indeed common teaching; St. Thomas makes it a general principle that we cannot be sure of distinguishing a natural from a supernatural act with certainty. This leads, plainly enough, to the direst consequences if we are to apply it to our present matter. P. Harent, who insists throughout his article on the complete absence of all evidence in faith save that of the natural motives, accepts the position *con amore*. P. Garrigou-Lagrange steers a less simple but more promising course. He begins with the refrain from St. Augustine which he recommended before at a critical juncture (*nimium gratia ista secreta est*) and the usual warnings that 'religious experience' is an unsure guide and that there is no knowledge in this life without 'conversion to phantasms'.[3] He then goes on: 'a supernatural act does not normally occur without a corresponding natural act, and to distinguish the two by experience alone is not easy. But it is cer-

[1] If the supernatural end were not immanent in the soul, the promise of eternal life would act upon it only as an external regulator. The life of the soul (and of its faculties) would not be a *new life*. The assent of faith would be not in itself, but only accidentally, supernatural.

[2] Col. 375. [3] This subject will concern us later.

tain, in accordance with the Councils, that no one believes as he must for his salvation "without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit", illumination for the intellect and inspiration for the will. Now most certainly this supernatural illumination produces some formal effect in our intellects; otherwise it would be quite pointless. In the theory of our (Jesuit) adversaries the necessity of this illumination does not appear; it is only affirmed because it is declared in the Councils.'[1] Our whole argument leads us to accept what is positive in these statements. Dom Stolz, in the unpublished notes already quoted, is even more definite, and says roundly that natural faith can be distinguished experimentally from supernatural faith, claiming that St. Thomas retreats from his general position when he declares: 'whoever has faith or knowledge, is certain that he has it.'[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 509.

[2] *S.Th.* I, II, 112, 5 ad 2. P. Harent (col. 373) refers this to faith in general with abstraction from the supernatural character of divine faith. But, since St. Thomas adds immediately that this certainty does not apply to grace and the supernatural virtue of charity, the context favours Dom Stolz's view. (St. Thomas teaches that faith can be retained even when habitual sanctifying grace has been lost.) P. Garrigou-Lagrange's *De Revelatione* did not appear in time for P. Harent to comment on it in his article. The second edition of *De Revelatione* has a note complaining that P. Harent has misinterpreted the Carmelite theologians of Salamanca by claiming their support for his theory, but says nothing more about him. It would have been interesting to read detailed criticisms of these writers by one another; unfortunately such discussions tend to run on parallel lines. P. Gardeil, for example, in the third edition of his *La Crédibilité et l'Apologétique*, remarks in the Preface that most of his critics hold theories of knowledge or of faith too remote from his own to make discussion useful, instancing in a note PP. Rousselot, Bainvel and Harent (all Jesuits). His business, he says, is simply to interpret St. Thomas. This is a pity from many points of view, particularly since some of P. Harent's objections to P. Gardeil's book were highly pertinent. P. Harent, on his side, treated the subject largely in terms of 'baroque' theology to the relative exclusion of the Dominican tradition. All this makes against clarification.

CHAPTER IV

ROUSSELOT'S THEORY

1. *The rejection of 'natural faith'*

Père Rousselot published his famous articles on faith in 1910,[1] and they still exercise a profound influence on theological thought. This influence has been fruitful in many ways, but it is not our present business to consider it except in so far as it bears upon the central problem of faith. It will be enough to consider Rousselot's most important conclusions: that natural reason cannot of itself reach the conviction that God has spoken through Christ and his Church and that it is the function of faith to supply what is lacking.

The first of these conclusions has met with a good deal of criticism—it seems at least highly disputable that 'natural faith' is an impossiblity. But this is not the objection to Rousselot's theory which will be stressed in these pages. The objection seems to be rather that he sees in the denial of 'natural faith' a means of explaining faith's supernatural certainty. In other words, the second of the conclusions stated above is acceptable only as a *statement* of the problem. Certainly faith supplies us with a certainty which we should otherwise lack. The question is: *How* does faith do it? It is no answer to say that it strengthens *reason*, for, if reason is *incapable* of seeing an object, such an object must be seen by a mode of knowledge which is supernatural. And (most importantly) what would this object be?

But Rousselot's conclusions must be examined at greater length before we can be justified in dismissing them. His rejection of 'natural faith' has obvious attractions. It seems an untidy arrangement that a convert should first acquire a purely rational certainty that Revelation has occurred and then, on top of that, a supernatural one. If we say that there is only one sort of certainty, which is fully rational and yet at the same time aided by grace, we seem to be interpreting the dogmatic facts in the most simple and sensible way. It is true that we have not explained *how* grace aids reason, but let us leave that aside for the moment.

[1] 'Les Yeux de la Foi' in *Recherches de Science Religieuse.*

It seems pretty clear that a 'natural certainty' in the present matter is at least hard to discover in a 'pure' state—that is, when faith is not present. The Christian tradition strongly suggests this conclusion: no one, according to St. Paul, says that Jesus is Lord, save in the Holy Spirit. The convert who was 'rationally satisfied' but hung back for some time (our thoughts turn inevitably to Newman), was not *certain,* but only unable to find any hole in the evidence, which is very different from seeing that there is not and cannot be a hole in it. He saw that everything pointed in one direction. He could not see any way out of it. But he could not yet see the way in. Isn't this state of mind, this awareness of a maximum probability (not a certainty) the typical state of the convert before faith's coming?

We may agree that this analysis of conversion is true to experience in general. But it does not follow that 'natural faith' is not possible. Even if we thought this conclusion justified in all contemporary instances of conversion, it would be going too far (we may reasonably say) to apply it to Christ's first witnesses. At our remove from the sources even miracles might leave the bare possibility of some loophole for doubt, although in some cases the evidence seems irrefusable (at the moment of impact, that is, for we can turn our backs on the clearest evidence provided that it does not pervade our whole experience). But if it had once occurred to St. Peter as a rational conclusion that all the 'fullness of the divinity' might 'dwell bodily in the man Christ Jesus', Christ's confirmation of it by word and action could hardly have failed to cause absolute conviction without the need of another (supernatural) mode of knowledge. In practice, no doubt, there is not this sharp dichotomy; faith does not wait until reason has run the whole course which lies open to it. But a course does lie open to reason *sometimes* which could lead it to certainty (though not to *faith's* certainty).

Rousselot's denial of 'natural faith' has the further disadvantage of depreciating the rational evidence. When the Church tells us that faith is reasonable, we need not see in this, it is true, any more than that faith and reason are in harmony, that the rational evidence, so far as it goes, is compatible with the teachings of faith. And Rousselot would say that this evidence *recommends* faith in the strongest way. But it seems more in keeping with the Church's decisions to say that rational evidence is always *de jure* obtainable

of such a sort as to convince the natural intelligence. It may not be easily obtainable, and it is perhaps seldom obtained even by converts of intellectual eminence. But it is there. Rousselot's full answer, however, would be that, so far from reason being opposed to faith, reason is only its true self when faith gives it eyes to see. 'To see what?' we ask. And when no satisfactory answer is forthcoming, we realize that the denial of natural faith is not compensated by an intelligible theory of supernatural faith. Rather we begin to suspect that the functions of faith and reason are being confused, not harmonized.

If in fact there were no evidence capable of producing a purely natural certainty, it would not follow from this that faith's function is to supply what is lacking to reason, that is, to strengthen the natural mode of knowing. If the facts on which reason can bear are too weak in themselves to support a certainty that God has revealed himself to us, there can be no question of 'enabling' reason to reach a certainty on a basis of them. Faith cannot help us to see what in fact is not there. Are there facts, then, which can cause such a certainty, not for the unaided natural reason, but only for the reason aided by grace? The acceptance of this second alternative has implications which will be considered in the next section. Here it is sufficient to observe that Rousselot's theory of the 'eyes of faith' is not a necessary consequence of his denial of 'natural faith'. As we may shortly see, it is his concept of faith which dictates the denial. If we do not share this concept of faith we shall draw a very different inference from the denial. If without faith there could be no certainty, we should say that faith, instead of supplying the reason with facts which appear to be *ex hypothesi* non-existent, provides us with evidence of a fresh order, inaccessible to the discursive natural reason. If we were to say that a rational certainty cannot be gained without a 'supernatural influx' on reason's own workings, we should not take this as the answer to our question about *faith's* certain assurance. To make sure of this we must consider more closely what could be meant by such an 'influx'.

2. *The workings of Grace*

Some of Rousselot's followers propose that a supernatural 'strengthening' is always required for an act of *submission*, for the public profession of faith. Certainly the gift of faith will never be

lacking in one who makes such a profession. That is not the point. The proposal is that faith's role is sufficiently explained by saying that it provides this 'strengthening'. Faith may indeed provide such a 'strengthening' (so we shall answer) as a by-product, but if we confine its effects to this we shall find ourselves faced with implications which are wholly unacceptable.

But let us examine this line of defence in greater detail and first let us set the stage with a parable. A man once walked with his host down a pitch-black stairway. 'There are fourteen stairs', said his host, 'I have often counted them . . . Thirteen, fourteen; you are on the landing'. But on the landing his guest still shuffled. He had good evidence that it was safe to go forward. He did not distrust his friend or question the facts. But it does not come naturally to us to move freely in darkness and in novel surroundings. Our fears prevent us from *grasping* the truth. The proposal which we are considering is that the function of faith is to banish fears. That is, the convert would have drawn back at a certain point unless God had given him supernatural help, just as the host might take hold of his friend's arm on the landing and, with an understanding laugh, pull him along—and his fears would vanish. In this account there is no lack of evidence. Faith does not show us any fresh object which reason could not discover *de jure*; *de facto*, however, reason is always blinded. Grace comes to the rescue and gives us a 'moral assurance'. Are not our fears the result of original sin? And does not grace restore our fallen nature?

We may accept this analysis only in a single respect. We may agree that there is no question of *resting* in a purely natural certainty. A purely natural certainty, we must say, would be followed immediately by the gift of faith—or at least we may question whether God ever delays it beyond this point, although we must not set bounds to his providence. It is in the order of things that natural knowledge should be the preparatory stage for the knowledge of faith. The first is the *occasion* for the second's coming. We should not expect, then, to find an interval in which there is only a natural certainty. If St. Peter had gained a natural certainty about Christ's divinity, God (we may suppose) would have shown himself as the Revealer, without further delay, in that supernatural form of communication which faith seems to imply.

The admission that a natural certainty does not seem to be found *apart* from the gift of faith does not mean that such a cer-

tainty might not be *logically* previous to it. The natural reason might reach the end of its course at the very moment when the certainty of faith is offered. If that certainty be *rejected,* then natural certainty also, so it appears, will be thrust aside. The offer of supernatural certainty is thus the critical point on which everything hangs. That would be our interpretation of the parable of the dark stairway.[1]

The interpretation given by the Rousselot school leads to the conclusion that man's natural powers are incapable of performing their own proper business. In the version which we have just considered the conclusion would be that man is incapable of obeying the dictates of his own reason. We need not take this to mean that man *must sin* unless grace comes to the rescue.[2] That would be not merely to take a low view of human nature or to see in the effects of original sin the corruption of nature, but to make nonsense of the whole notion of moral responsiblity. We may give a more benign interpretation to this alleged incapacity. It will mean that there must always be material (involuntary) failures to follow reason as a result of original sin. Such a view may not strike us as plausible, but it is at least free on the face of it from any absurdity. We might even allow it for the sake of argument. The objection to the theory of faith which we are considering is not its denial of 'natural certainty', as we have seen already; it is the concept of faith presupposed by it which is the fundamental trouble. This alleged incapacity of the natural powers is bound up with a theory which reduces faith to a mere 'aid' of the natural powers. And the theory seems to break down plainly enough under the test of analysis.

For if the function of faith is to supply us with 'moral assurance', how could it do so? We cannot explain this by referring to an 'influx on will' which is not also an influx on intellect. We cannot suggest that God cancels our freedom of choice. And to strengthen the will he must give it a clearer view of its object. To purge our

[1] It must be added that the assent of faith is always a leap in the dark in the sense that the doctrines of faith are inevident in themselves. But it must be evident that they are truths. The moral of the parable, properly interpreted, is simply that the offer of faith is the occasion of great temptations. If we do not let God take us forward, we fall back.

[2] The doctrine of the Council of Trent is often alleged in favour of such a view. What is true is that grace is offered to all men and therefore that the absence of grace is to be explained by the presence of sin.

emotions he must direct them to objects. We can banish false fears only by facing realities. The perfect will is the unspoilt aim at the truth. God urges us forward not by a mere blind pressure but by enlightenment. We may say that he takes away obstacles and distractions, but this is only the negative side of a positive process—what draws us to him is the truth he reveals to us. *Quid fortius desiderat anima,* says St. Augustine, *quam veritatem?*

The theory that faith's certainty supplies what is lacking to the natural powers cannot be justified, then, by an attempt to state it in the terms of the will. We are left with the result which was indicated at the start of the chapter, that faith strengthens reason to perceive what it could not perceive by its own unaided resources. Thus the function of faith, on this theory, is to reinforce the discursive powers.[1] It follows from this that the evidence is only *natural* evidence. We are enabled by faith to perceive the conclusion of the apologetical arguments. And this is not consonant with faith's supernatural character. Faith does not simply arrange the pieces for us, put our existing premisses into a syllogism, organize facts to produce a valid inference. For the consequent certainty would be resting on these natural processes and not on faith itself. Faith is not merely an instrument in the service of our natural modes of knowledge. If it makes us sometimes better logicians or better historians, this is an incidental result, an intensification of our existing resources which may be called its secondary effect. (Nor will it serve to speak of a 'supernatural light', if the object itself is a natural object). If faith raises our natural faculties, it must present an object which is supernatural. This must be its primary effect. And that is why we cannot explain its effects by referring to the effects of original sin on nature as such. Adam had faith before he fell.

3. *The theory of the 'supernatural sign'*

The theory of faith which seemed to be in the ascendant in France before the outbreak of war in 1939 was the theory which

[1] The alleged absolute incapacity on the part of reason to perform its own proper business seems to be sufficiently objectionable in itself. It implies at the least an extreme view of the effects of original sin. But the present argument against the theory of the Rousselot school is not grounded primarily on this objection. It is grounded on the truth that grace is not merely a remedy for our disorders; it leads us positively to our supernatural end.

may be called that of the 'supernatural sign'. In the years of peace Rousselot's views had made great headway, and the theory which we are now to consider was largely influenced by them. It is not possible here to do more than disengage a certain strand of thought which runs through a great mass of materials; and it must be enough by way of reference to this wide field to say that the theory in question is to be found in Canon Mouroux's 'Structure "Personnelle" de la Foi'[1] and Canon Masure's *La Grande Route Apologétique*. Now that communications with France are reopened and the immense literary output of Catholic thinkers is once more at our disposal, it would appear that the influence of this school is still strong. But the intense intellectual activity of French theologians and philosophers has continued to develop so vigorously even during the years of war that it is scarcely possible for anyone in this country to venture on generalizations in regard to it. In any case the theory demands consideration for its intrinsic merits. Indeed, it will be obvious that it goes a long way towards a definite answer to our question, and the only criticism of it that will be offered here is that it is incomplete. It will help us to make certain precisions, but it seems to stop short (like other theories which we have considered) at the crucial point.

The theory can be stated in a few words. The Church, it argues, is God's witness *par excellence*; we find him in her. She is the instrument by which God is made known to us not merely as the explanation of the Universe but as the last end of intellectual creatures. We find in her the answer to those desires which God has implanted in us. We find his action in her and his seal upon her. He proves her claim by his presence in her. All this is true—but it has implications which are not drawn out, and until they are drawn out we have no answer to our question.

How do we discover God in his Church as our last end? It would not be enough to say that we find God and his Revelation solely in the outward *effects* of faith which his Church manifests. For that would be only to say to oneself: 'Here are these Christians, this institution—inexplicable, unless the explanation is what it is claimed to be'; in other words, it would be to use an apologetic argument. And apologetic arguments are only faith's 'preamble'. (Here again is the shortcoming of Rousselot's theory—it offers us nothing more than the discursive processes of reason 'aided' by

[1] The article which has been mentioned above (ch. II).

grace, and there is no need to argue further that this is no real solution.) One may suggest that when the Church is described to us as a 'supernatural sign' there is a subtle confusion between the natural and the supernatural. The Church is thought of as a sort of bridge which spans the gulf between the two. So in a sense she is, but not in the sense which is implied by these apologetes. We may say that God's grace is found in the Church, and we may say that our discursive processes show us the Church as inexplicable on any 'natural' hypothesis. But we do not gain God's grace simply as a result of these discursive processes. They are only a preliminary. We gain God's grace in the Church not by any merely natural 'judgement of value', but by a supernatural contact with God himself in which he gives us his own guarantee that the Church is his.

It is this all-important conclusion which is omitted in the theory of the 'supernatural sign'. Its supporters seek to give supernatural dignity to the processes which their theory describes by appealing to the moral dispositions which are required for them. There are indeed moral requirements for these processes as well as for the act of faith itself. But we cannot transform these preliminary processes into the act of faith by such appeals. This theory is fresh to us only in the terms that it uses—not in its ultimate bearing; it is another appeal to what it proves to be only natural evidence. We are to find a 'supernatural meaning' in this evidence and thereby to gain faith's certainty. We may indeed find a 'supernatural meaning': we may *infer* that grace is present in the Christian Church. But to do this is not to accept the divine authority; the divine authority is not yet the *motive* of our assent to the truth of Christianity, the final ground of our certainty. This, then, is no description of faith.[1]

It would be better perhaps to speak of the Church as a 'signpost' rather than as a 'sign' in relation to those who are outside her. For a signpost points to something which is as yet invisible, whereas a sign conveys the spiritual power of him who makes it, so that in seeing the sign we find his meaning—it is a sort of extension of him (things do not mean, as Cook Wilson put it, it is *we* who mean). To find God's meaning, then, we must find *God* meaning. And what he means we shall find to be his Church. Then we shall

[1] 'A supernatural light' is often invoked in this context. It has been noted already that the expression is equivocal.

find him in her; then she becomes his sign, for she is the means of grace and the rule of life. But this is not what we start with when we undertake to prove her mission; we cannot directly point to it in her—we can only show her pointing to God who will declare it to us. He uses her to prepare for his coming, to announce his Gospel and to summon us to him. But it is not until he gives us his own direct and personal summons that he shows her to us as the spotless bride, the mother of holy souls, the Body of Christ. God reveals himself as the goal of our knowledge and reveals at the same time the means of salvation (although, as we have seen earlier, this is not always explicitly recognized). In this sense faith discovers his impress in the society founded by him.

We return, then, to what may be called a theory of 'divine occasionalism' in respect of the visible proofs of the Church's mission. The seed of the Gospel must first be sown; but the final harvest is something beyond all human 'meanings'. The words of the preacher may seem to produce the result— but *non sua poma*; they only prepare the way for the Lord of the harvest. The entry into the household of Faith is not gained just by reading a riddle, by a mere scientific enquiry. We cannot make natural and supernatural knowledge of God follow one same pattern. In natural knowledge we know him through his effects in such a way that he is always behind them; we know him only in terms of them. In supernatural knowledge he moves (as it were) to the foreground. He does not engross it, and it may not be easy to find him there. All that we find to record in actual experience may be the gradual growth of certainty that God speaks to us in his Church—we do not analyze the process by which his truth is conveyed to us. But we cannot justify such a certainty unless we allow that it is based on more than natural evidence.

4. *Fr. D'Arcy on Faith*

The Rousselot school is represented in this country chiefly by Fr. D'Arcy. His *Nature of Belief*, published fifteen years ago,[1] at present holds the field as the most influential modern work on this subject. It does not need saying that this book is a brilliant piece of apologetics which covers a great deal of ground in a most valuable way. But it does need pointing out that the book deals only in a very general and cursory fashion with the particular problem

[1] By Sheed and Ward.

which is our concern, and that what it does say about it is not accepted by many Thomists.

Fr. D'Arcy does not offer us *ex professo* any analysis of the act of faith. For the most part he is engaged in describing the moral preparation for faith and the 'repercussion' of faith upon our natural human powers. There are, indeed, occasions when he (like other writers whom we have considered) seems to be grappling with the central problem and to be well on the way to a real solution; but he draws back. In his chapter on 'Divine Faith' he tells us that 'this certainty (of faith) comes in one full and complete act and carries with it its own validity'.[1] We may accept this as a correct statement of the theological problem, but Fr. D'Arcy, like Rousselot, seems to regard such a statement as bringing the discussion to an end. What we want to know most urgently is what justifies such a certainty, how it is possible. It cannot be said that Fr. D'Arcy has offered any definite answer to this question.

If we examine certain other passages we may be able to find some indications of his view. At the beginning of the chapter in question we read: 'when we are confronted by the word and work of one whose ways are mysterious and divine, we need an interior illumination and a taste for the divine beauty and good before we are able to seize their proper significance and to know the message as our way and our truth.'[2] This is clearly true. But it is of no use to recommend an 'illumination' to the serious thinker unless we are prepared to point to some evidence, some object to cause it. What is this evidence in Fr. D'Arcy's view? It is not the natural evidence simply as such, for we 'exchange our human pattern for the divine',[3] and to recognize the divine summons 'the capacity of (the soul's) pattern must be enlarged, a new perspective glimpsed'.[4] But there is nothing to show what this new perspective is. It seems an inevitable conclusion at this point that faith must supply us with *fresh evidence*. Fr. D'Arcy allows that we must find a special feature in the assent of faith, but instead of treating it in terms of evidence he appeals to a 'dynamic element'.[5] He goes on to consider the work of grace in terms of moral purification and we are not encouraged to look for a new kind of knowledge. It is clear that he appeals to the will as opposed to the intellect.

It may be objected that Fr. D'Arcy offers a solution by applying to the assent of faith that theory of 'interpretation' with which the

[1] p. 316. [2] p. 299. [3] p. 330. [4] p. 336. [5] p. 314.

earlier part of his book is concerned. Why, then, this appeal to the will? In any case the assent of faith would be reduced to nothing more than a supreme case of those natural beliefs (e.g. in Britain's insularity) which Fr. D'Arcy has so attractively analyzed. In such cases the evidence is an indefinitely spreading context of experience which eventually permits of only one interpretation. This applies well enough to faith's preamble but, if our argument has been sound, it is not sufficient for faith's certainty. So one of Fr. D'Arcy's critics was led to say that his vindication of faith seemed unsatisfactory in so far as it relied upon 'the unity of indirect reference', this not sufficiently justifying absolute certainty in such a matter, and that the effective case lay in the exposition of a 'supernatural morality', the elevation of the human 'pattern' of mind to the supernatural level.[1]

Fr. D'Arcy, no doubt, does intend his theory of 'interpretation' as a means of solving the theological problem, but it does not appear how he can reconcile this with the peculiar emphasis which he (in common with so many other writers) places on *will*. Within the meaning of 'interpretation' he seems to place a moral attitude not only as a condition required for certainty but as a cause of certainty—it *specifies*, gives us evidence. This, then, and not 'interpretation' would be his final answer. At least we must say that the vital question of evidence is allowed to fall into the background. What is the object to which our purified intentions are directed? What precisely are they enabled to aim at in the light of faith? What does faith present for us to love and to know when we are prepared for it?

Yet one of the conclusions to which Fr. D'Arcy leads his readers is that there is no final distinction between the good and the true. There can be no question of excluding the operations of will from the act of faith; indeed, as we have seen, we must give them a special emphasis. But it must not be the sort of emphasis which rejects the legitimate claims of the intellect. The 'act of the person' does not transcend the acts of the powers in the sense that it leaves them behind and lives its own life—it lives in the powers and owns their functions. To claim that a certainty must always be based on evidence is not to adopt a 'narrow intellectualism' or a 'faculty psychology'. It is simply to appeal to human experience.

Before we leave the *Nature of Belief* it ought to be noted, per-

[1] M. de la Bedoyere in *The Dublin Review*, Jan. 1932.

haps, that Fr. D'Arcy would consider the present writer's epistemological position one of 'extreme' realism, if one may judge from his references to Cook Wilson. He applies his theory of 'interpretation' to our natural knowledge of God and opposes it to Cook Wilson's thesis that we must have some 'direct apprehension' of God if we are to maintain that he exists.[1] Fr. D'Arcy denies that the 'divine is a datum of experience'. He speaks with some hesitation of the way in which we come to know God ('if it is not an inference, it is hovering on the verge of an inference'),[2] but he seems to accept a theory of 'indirect knowledge' which is not reconcilable with the conclusions of our First Part.

Fr. D'Arcy's recently published *Belief and Reason*[3] is rather an application than a fresh statement of his views. In the long letter printed at the end of it he confirms the impression left by his earlier book. He urges that the proof of the pudding is found in the eating. No one denies this in the sense that there is a progressive enlightenment in faith. But what assures us that this *is* a pudding in the first place? 'Faith then takes the risk', writes Fr. D'Arcy, 'but it is more than a prudential venture. If the *desires of the soul* have not been clogged . . . they make a man aware that the good of eternal life held out to him is his final destination and apotheosis'.[4] Throughout this letter we find 'right desires' introduced to *supplement* the external evidence—it is not just a question of stressing the moral conditions for faith; and Fr. D'Arcy is still disinclined to examine the exigencies of the full meaning of 'certainty'.

5. *Theory and practice*

It will serve as a general summary of results if we consider how the theories of faith which have been examined correspond with pastoral practice. In most of this chapter the adult convert has been in mind. Let us turn to the faithful who have 'difficulties' (often they call them 'doubts'). It is common enough to hear people saying that they 'seem to have lost their faith'. But you do not lose your faith as you lose a sixpence. What they mean (as a rule) is that they have lost any inclination to perform their usual religious exercises or even that they have acquired a strong distaste for them. What is the regular practice of their advisers? Not to lay stress on apologetical arguments (although it may often be useful

[1] p. 256. [2] p. 259. [3] Burns & Oates, 1944. [4] p. 98. (my italics).

to mention some), but to urge them to prayer—to give God the chance to speak more plainly. (And everyone agrees that prayer is the all-important requisite, on the side of the subject, for the grace of conversion.) Those who have 'difficulties' will admit (very often) that the thought of apostasy fills them with horror, and they may be brought to realize that this is not just the fear of the unfamiliar, of an untried and possibly troublesome freedom, or of a break with habits or with relations and friends. They realize then that they cannot get rid of their faith without doing violence to themselves.

This shows that in spite of emotional stresses faith's evidence still holds mastery over them. The trouble perhaps was precisely that they had thought of their faith as something which needed to be justified by rational argument and that they found their rational equipment insufficient. The realization that this is a mistaken view will lead in such cases to the end of the trouble. They may be referred to a real object, dim but certainly discoverable, in the soul's 'centre'. There is no need for them to receive detailed instruction in supernatural psychology. But one may perhaps suggest that to recommend 'acts of will' is not always the wisest proceeding. It is with the 'whole soul' that we go to God and a false psychology leads to a fumbling and ineffective treatment. The honest enquirer is justifiably troubled by certain expressions. If faith is described to him as an 'adherence' to what is wholly inevident, as a movement of will towards an object which is in no sense perceived, he will conclude that the thing is impossible.

Rousselot's school is at one with Cardinal Billot and P. Harent in binding up the apologetical arguments into the act of faith itself. Theory and practice are thus at odds. It is interesting to see in this connexion how P. Harent deals with the case of the young man who is surrounded by dangers to his faith and is unable (through no fault of his own) to combat them successfully by his natural resources. He must be assured, P. Harent tells us,[1] that God will come to his aid, if he prays, even if this involves a miraculous kind of intervention. But we cannot treat this as an abnormal case which requires an abnormal explanation. (For one thing the rational grounds are so often too weak to support a certainty.) It is no 'miracle' if a certainty in this matter proves to be based on God's own word which is uttered in secret. P. Garrigou-Lagrange's

[1] *Art. cit.*, col. 342.

treatment of the case, we may suppose, would be very different, for faith in his eyes is the beginning of that 'mystical life'[1] which is *de jure* if not *de facto* the normal development of the Christian. That is the fundamental reason why the Dominican approach has proved more promising than that which is characteristic of the Jesuit writers.

The 'mystical life' will engage us in detail later. Another chapter is still required to defend the view which these pages have offered from certain serious objections. But before we begin it it will be useful to state the position reached as regards Thomist theories in general. They all lay stress on the fact that there is a *dynamism* to be reckoned with in the act of faith. This has not been denied; it has been urged, indeed, that the more fully the *personality* comes into play, the more the dynamic character of its act is manifested. Intellect is only truly itself when the will's collaboration with it is perfect. But conversely will cannot be truly itself if its metaphysical relations with intellect are misconceived. St. Thomas's doctrine of faith seems to bring out one side of this truth at the expense of the other. Faith, we are told, is an imperfect form of that supernatural vision of God which is reserved for the life of glory. This shews us that it is a tendency towards something beyond it; it carries with it a love of what is at present denied to us. But that does not dispense us from asking what faith's knowledge is in the present life. The Dominican school has seemed to shelve this question by ambiguity, the Jesuit school of Billot to exacerbate it by erecting obscurantism into a theory, the school of Rousselot to deny that it is a question. The manualists often fight shy of it, and it tends to fall between two stools, for it belongs exclusively neither to dogma nor to apologetics.[2] Yet it is just here that its supreme importance lies. Faith's certainty is the goal of apologetics and the foundation of all theological thinking.

The root of the trouble, it may now be suggested, is an overvigorous adherence to Aristotelian psychology. If this be true,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 513.

[2] There are two books in particular not yet mentioned in which the enquirer might expect to find an answer to his question: *The Theology of Faith* by Fr. McKenna, O.P. (Brown and Nolan, 1914), and *Faith and its Rational Justification* (a translation of the work of Mgr. Brunhes, Sands, 1931). The first is a most valuable compilation of theological teaching, the second a most valuable essay in apologetics, which is alive to the dangers of 'voluntarism'. But neither faces the *crux theologorum*.

what we find in St. Thomas is a 'spiritual' tradition struggling to come to terms with a system which is too narrow for it.[1] If the scope of this book permitted, it would be a fascinating study to follow the theme of faith's 'illumining' from St. John's Gospel through Clement of Alexandria and the Fathers (the Greeks especially) to the thirteenth century, and to compare St. Thomas's treatment with St. Bonaventure's. It must suffice to shew in the following chapter that there is modern authority for claiming a 'spiritual' (or 'intellectual') intuition which provides us with non-sensible evidence.

[1] In Jan. 1944 an article appeared in *The Dublin Review*, 'The influence of Aristotle's doctrine of the imagination on the theology of Aquinas' by Mr. Peter Stubbs. It is a protest against the doctrine of the 'return to the phantasm' as an essential feature of all human knowing.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDING A THEORY

1. *Theological difficulties*

It was pointed out in the second chapter of this Part that the solution here offered of the problem of faith could not claim attention unless it could satisfy certain conditions—it would be necessary to show that this solution did not fall foul either of orthodox theology or of Christian experience. The task was postponed until the claims of other solutions had been more fully examined. It is now time to address ourselves to it.

We have seen that the Thomists insist on the 'inevidence' of faith: faith is not 'vision'. Obviously it is not the Beatific Vision. But Thomists are inclined to speak as though that were the only sort of supernatural 'vision'. We may choose to reserve the word for the Beatific Vision on the ground that this is its established meaning in the technical language of Scholastic theology. This should not prevent us, however, from allowing that a supernatural intuition of God is possible in the present life. P. Garrigou-Lagrange has protested on several occasions that faith in the Thomist theory is not a 'little Beatific Vision'. This would indeed be a most improper description of the knowledge of faith. But if faith is a form of knowledge, it must be *some* sort of vision. P. Garrigou-Lagrange's position would appear to be that there can be no degrees of supernatural vision—it is all or nothing. But there are degrees, by general admission, in the life of Glory. Why not in this world's life of grace as well? No doubt there is a difference between supernatural knowledge in the present life and the Beatific Vision which deserves to be called a difference in kind rather than one of degree. The very presence of this corruptible body seems to be sufficient ground for such a distinction. Our supernatural awareness of God, although we may call it a 'foreground' knowledge as compared with natural (or 'background') knowledge, is at first no more than a pencil-ray piercing the 'veil' of creatures. But it must have a certain immediacy, if it is knowledge at all. As we shall see later, there is high authority for claiming an immediate supernatural knowledge in the higher reaches

of the life of grace. And to make such a claim for the first stage of this life is only to develop hints which are supplied by the Thomists themselves.

The suggestion made in the last paragraph may seem shocking at first. But it is not a confusion of faith's certainty with 'mystical experience'. The suggestion is that there is a mode of knowledge common to faith's certainty and to the 'mystic states', but such a homogeneity of psychological structure in the life of grace leaves room for the widest difference within it. It is a far cry from the bare certainty of faith to the transforming union. There will be no question, then, of vulgarizing the experience of the saints, a practice which has become increasingly common of late and which has called for the most severe theological censures. Popular works on 'mysticism' usually buttress a sentimental pantheism by the utterances of heterodox German mystics or of Eastern teachers (whose 'conceptualizations' of their experiences few Westerners can safely interpret). If they do draw on the main stream of authentic European mysticism, they fail as a rule to trace it to its sources; they emphasize what are only subsidiary features in it and miss its true meaning. But all this is no reason for refusing to admit the subject into any argument.

It may now be asked how our view is to be reconciled with the Church's teaching that the virtue of faith is infused into the soul at baptism. The answer, in brief, would be that the gift of this virtue is the gift of a supernatural power to adhere to God which carries with it a supernatural power to know him. This power of knowledge does not reveal its activity at once in consciousness. It is a quality of a human intellect, subject to human conditions. The mind must develop and its powers, natural and supernatural, develop with it. There is no sudden flash of illumination, but a conviction forms, a sort of pressure, a bringing of intellect, as St. Paul put it, into captivity. This power of knowledge, we may suppose, will not be exercised at first in such a way as to cause a true certainty. We should have to allow, then, that the unreflective and undeveloped Christian, although he has the gift of faith and although it is to some extent—presumably—active in him, nevertheless may not have faith's *certainty*.

Does it follow that he makes no 'acts of faith'? Here we must distinguish. He may exercise the supernatural virtue of faith before it has reached that stage of development in which it causes

certainty, and such acts may be called incomplete or imperfect acts of faith.[1] They are assents to the authority of God and they are not accompanied by any shadow of doubt. The authority of God is exercising a certain attraction which gives rise (in conjunction with natural reason) to a 'taking-for-granted'. And that is all that we have to maintain in order to shew that an 'act of faith' can be made by such people. But this state of affairs can hardly persist throughout a whole lifetime. A complete or perfect act of faith must be made at some time or other by all the faithful—so we should expect, at least. When they are tempted to doubt, when 'taking-for-granted' fails them, the certainty of faith, which is at their service, reveals itself to them if they allow it to do so. In any case, unless faith contains within it the *means* of genuine certainty (even if this might never be used in particular cases), we can give no satisfactory account of it to the reflective enquirer.

The final objection to be considered in the present section is that we have blurred the distinction between faith and charity. Faith can persist, the Vatican Council tells us, even when charity has been destroyed by mortal sin.[2] But it is agreed that 'dead' faith is faith in an anomalous form (*fides informis*); living faith is 'formed' (*formata*) by charity. The two virtues, deriving from sanctifying grace as the soul's 'new nature', are made for one another. When grace has been lost, it does not necessarily follow that the power of supernatural knowledge is taken away. We need say no more than that it is *atrophied*. And it does not follow that the convert's first act of faith can be made in the absence of charity.[3] 'Where Faith is planted Charity will automatically grow.

[1] What is here called an 'imperfect act of faith' is an act made under the influence of the virtue of faith, which does not carry with it certainty in the strict sense in which we have used this term. It is not what the theologian refers to as the act of faith, which is the *proper act* of the virtue and always carries with it certainty. If it be considered dangerous to suggest that the virtue of faith may exert the above-mentioned influence, I should gladly accept another explanation of the facts. This 'imperfect act' is an assent without doubt and without error, and this would seem to be all that is required by most theologians for the certitude of Faith.

[2] Denziger, *Enchiridion*, 1791.

[3] The usual explanation of the convert's first act of faith is that he receives a 'transient' grace. The supernatural virtues do not take root in his soul until he has received justification by baptism, sacramentally or by desire. The subject is recognized as a theological difficulty, and the hesitant state of theologians' opinion may be seen by reference to the articles on the subject in *The Irish*

Faith, with Hope and Charity, is infused into us at Baptism, and if the growth of Charity is not in the measure that we would like, it is because Faith is feeble, because we are content that our Faith should remain rather in the realm of mere information. That Charity should grow is the ultimate aim of all our spiritual life . . . But Charity in this life will grow in height as Faith increases in depth, and this it is that gives to Faith the place of primary importance among the virtues.'[1] These words are taken from a recent book of simple Catholic instructions.

2. *The Experience of the Faithful*

To claim that the faithful enjoy a supernatural intuition of God will still sound fantastic, despite the precisions which were made in the last chapter, unless to support such a claim we can offer an analysis of their experience which does not fly in the face of facts.

The objects to which the minds of the faithful are explicitly directed, when they reflect on the grounds of their belief, are generally, no doubt, those visible signs of the Church's mission which recommend it to the natural intellect. They will not be aware, ordinarily at least, of a supernatural certainty *as* supernatural. This is understandable when we remember that the natural mode of knowledge does not cease to operate when the supernatural mode makes its appearance. The two modes operate concurrently, and it is only in special circumstances that they will be experimentally distinguishable. It is only when natural motives for assent appear insufficient that the supra-sensible evidence need be explicitly recognized for what it is. Even so, we must not expect a clear account of it. 'The rational arguments do not wholly satisfy me', a man will say, 'but over and above them something assures me . . . ' 'Something', we have argued, must mean *somebody*. The rule of faith has been found invested with a transcendent force and

Ecclesiastical Record for 1939. (The conclusions there reached by Fr. Egan, S.J., are in many respects similar to those of this book.) Quesnel was condemned for saying that faith is 'the first grace and the fount of all others' (Denz. 1377), presumably because he disregarded the fact that faith is sterile unless it is developed by our co-operation with grace; it is a *dynamic* virtue. The Council of Trent tells us that it is 'the foundation and root of all justification' (Denz. 800–801), although without hope and charity it does not make us '*living* members' of Christ's body.

[1] *Our Living Faith* by the Rev. S. M. Shaw (Burns Oates 1942), p. 22.

value. It proves to have an *absolute* 'backing', that is, the self-revelation of Absolute Being is made in the presentation of it.

If this were so, an objector might urge, there would be an explicit awareness of God's presence, and it seems an extravagance to postulate such an awareness even in the case which we are now considering. The answer to this, it seems, is that knowledge of God may be certain, explicit, although it remains profoundly obscure. The difficulty is caused by confusing explicitness with conceptual clarity. It would be a mistake to write off a claim to certainty as a mere 'opinion' on the ground that it is conceptually inarticulate. But the objector may say that the point has not yet been met. Is there, he may ask, a claim to any knowledge of God, however obscure, over and above the bare acknowledgement of his existence and his authority?

Here it must be remembered that all our knowledge of God has a developing character. All knowledge, as we have seen, contains an implicit affirmation of God's existence. When it becomes explicit, it thus lacks an element of novelty without which we are disinclined to formulate claims to fresh certainties. To put this in a more concrete fashion, a so-called atheist may allow that he is a lover of truth and that this love has grown stronger in him with the passing of years. In such a case there *is* knowledge of God, and the 'atheist's' denial is based on a misunderstanding—he does not realize that his disagreement with the theologians does not bear in fact on the root of the matter but only on conceptualizations of it.[1] And there must have been a moment when this love of truth first appeared in consciousness, although that moment was not much remarked at the time and was soon forgotten. In the same way, *mutatis mutandis,* the transcendent force of the Church's claims will not be referred to by the faithful in terms of an increase in their knowledge of God, for they too will need to realize that they *have* a knowledge of God which does not arise merely as the conclusion of an ordinary inferential process, although they may have no 'sensible devotion'. This knowledge, indeed, is not conceptually distinct precisely because it is so familiar. But it *is* a knowledge: it is seldom the object of specific reflection, but it is 'lived'. And the intensification of this knowledge fails to excite remark because as a rule it is a gradual process. Even when the intensification does

[1] On this subject *v.* the article by P. Bouuaerts, S.J., in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique,* 1921.

become an object of reflection (as in the crucial case of temptations to unbelief) the pervasiveness of this knowledge still militates against clarity. We may point again to the knowledge of self as showing that we can be certain of realities which are yet known in a very obscure and incomplete fashion. And we may observe that this note of familiarity is still found (indeed, in an accentuated form) in the higher stages of supernatural knowledge. Doesn't St. Augustine refer to this when he speaks of the beauty which is at once forever old and forever young?

It may now appear that this account, as a *psychological* description, is not hard to reconcile with those usually given by Thomists. All that is before the mind with conceptual clarity is a rule of faith offered by a visible authority with a guarantee which has an absolute validity. The nature of this guarantee may be quite unformulated. The Thomist contention is that the object of faith is *Deitas ut sic* under the form of particular propositions. We may accept this in the sense that the knowledge of faith is a knowledge of God 'behind' the rule of faith, but we need to add that it is only because we thus know him that we know the rule with a supernatural certainty. The supernatural knowledge of God is logically prior to the assent to the rule. The Thomist account, from the *epistemological* point of view, is at best ambiguous. And we are not encouraged to interpret it in a satisfactory sense. There is a general unwillingness to allow that *Deitas ut sic* is a genuine object even in the highest stages of supernatural development; it seems all too clear that in the bare assent of faith the object of the intellect is conceived of as being mere 'propositions'. The present contention is that just as the mind must not stop at 'concepts' if it is to know reality, or at created realities if it is to have knowledge of God, so it must pass beyond all sense-grounded data if the problem of faith's certainty is to be settled—it must have a supernatural knowledge of God. God makes himself known to us in the assent of faith in the act in which he presents faith's mysteries to us. It is not that we see faith's mysteries in God, for in that case faith would not be distinguished from 'vision'. We know the truth as presented by him. And this means that we must know him in so far as presenting it.

To sum up, the ground of our certainty in the assent of faith is obscure for several reasons. Not only are we distracted by our sense-grounded awareness, our knowledge of ourselves and of our

surroundings, but we gain this certainty *à propos* of that visible authority which is at the same time presenting credentials to us, bringing into exercise our natural powers of discursive reason. We hear God's voice, but he speaks to us in his Church. The visible Church, her claims and teachings, are in the foreground, although God pervades it with his transcendent authority. Thus we may not explicitly recognize this new mode of his presence. It is rather like looking into a case with a top made of coloured glass. Our attention is caught by the objects within and we notice that they have an unusual colour. We do not advert to the fact that we are seeing also the glass itself which is spreading the colour. This crude comparison must not be pressed, but it may at least help to distinguish the present proposal from certain seventeenth century theories of an 'illuminist' nature which are plainly contradicted by the facts of experience. According to these the faithful will be protected against accepting as orthodox the statements of a preacher which in fact are unorthodox by an *illuminatio suasiva* or *discerniculum experimentale*,[1] a receiving of some sudden message from God. Such theories are not even considering our central problem. Yet modern theologians are sometimes inclined to suppose that this is the best case which can be made out for claiming a supernatural knowledge in the assent of faith.

3. *The Charge of Novelty*

The objection which will have most weight is that the present thesis is a novelty. One answer to this is that an answer to what is admittedly a theological difficulty must have a certain character of novelty. But it remains true that such an answer must show itself as a development of existing theology; a violent departure from all existing schools of thought is naturally suspect. It has been already claimed that this thesis is a logical exigency of the Thomist position, but it remains to show that modern Thomist theologians have come very close to it. It would be possible to quote a considerable number of *obiter dicta* which imply clearly enough a dissatisfaction with the current 'official' accounts of faith, and point unmistakably towards that which has been proposed in this book, although they contain no definite proposal themselves. For example, P. Jansen remarks in a footnote to one of his articles (quoting *velata dum meridiem cernat fides*): 'cannot faith

[1] *v.* Harent D.C.T., *art. cit.*, esp. coll. 480–482.

perceive through its veil a dark ray of this full moon?'[1] He is working on the principle that the knowledge of faith must be in some sense of the same kind as that of the Beatific Vision, and this is a clue which we shall follow up in the next section. But later in the article this perception of faith is given an interpretation which seems to make it unintelligible: it is attributed to the *will* in apparent opposition to the intellect and our old difficulties face us again. P. Jansen's conclusion will be examined more fully later.

We must now consider other *obiter dicta*. These are the words of P. Verrièle on our subject: 'There is a presence which is obscure *in actual consciousness*, in a form which is covered over and *unrecognized*, of a divine light or a real divine impression. This, then, explains two facts with astonishing completeness: the higher certainty of all supernatural faith and (in particular) its formal motive—which must be specifically divine and is so hard to indicate otherwise with any precision. And this makes it so much easier to explain how the graces of faith which are absolutely necessary for salvation are granted to negative infidels (that is, to those in good faith) without a miraculous divine intervention.'[2] This analysis is at least on the lines of that offered in the previous section. P. Verrièle continues: 'Thus a magnificent synthesis opens before us of the whole *supernatural order of knowledge and love* in a perfect unity. As in the ontological order the supernatural is specifically characterized by an immediate union of God with the soul, of substance with substance, so too all supernatural knowledge will be specified relatively to the natural by its character as a *more direct apprehension* which always attains either God or his action or his presence in us.'

All that this needs is the avoidance of any suggestion that faith's certainty can be caused by a knowledge which is not in a real sense a knowledge of God, however unformulated and however much 'diluted' by other knowledge. P. Verrièle is unwilling to speak of an 'intuition' of God: on an earlier page he tells us that we know God in this life only in the mirror of the soul itself or of finite ideas, which seems to suggest that he explains faith's certainty, after all, by a 'mediate' knowledge. And this doctrine of 'mediate' knowledge seems ambiguous. Is God an *object* (however imper-

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1934, p. 608.

[2] *Le Surnaturel en nous et le péché originel*, Bloud et Gay, 1934, p. 78. The italics in this and in the following quotation are the author's.

fectly)? In this part of his book P. Verrièle draws his materials from an important article by P. Maréchal.[1] It is well known that P. Maréchal maintained the thesis of a supernatural *intuition* of God in the 'mystical' life.[2] P. Verrièle does not mention this, and interprets P. Maréchal's evidence in a less definite sense. P. Maréchal does not seem to have offered in any of his works an explicit analysis of the act of faith, but we may appeal to his high authority for claiming that a direct knowledge of God in this life may be proposed without danger of heresy. It follows that our whole position has theological backing. We have only to put together P. Maréchal's epistemological doctrine with P. Verrièle's analysis of faith's certainty.

Among the passages quoted by P. Maréchal and taken over from him with approval by P. Verrièle is the following from P. Hugueny, O.P., being part of a Thomist interpretation of Tauler's doctrine: 'Mystical knowledge begins with the act of supernatural faith. . . . It is this beginning of obscure awareness, without vision and without (sensible) appearances, which gives the act of faith its conviction and its vitality.'[3] From this it is only a step to the present thesis. And the step is surely inevitable. This 'obscure awareness' must bear upon God the Revealer. It would be possible to extend the list of these indications, but it seems unnecessary.[4] It may be wise, however, to add that they would not be confined to technical works of mystical theology: this thesis is implied by preachers with impressive frequency. For example, the general tenor of Fr. Vincent McNabb's 'Oxford Conferences on Faith'[5] is

[1] 'Sur les cimes de l'oraison', *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Feb. and March 1929. The article summarizes the general position in theology on the subject of mystical knowledge. In the course of it P. Maréchal offers Abbot Butler a further explanation of 'intuition' in reply to certain comments in *Western Mysticism*. He had received from him Abbot Chapman's article 'What is Mysticism?' (*The Downside Review*, 1928) and rejects its theory of infused species.

[2] I shall have occasion to quote his words on this subject later.

[3] 'Sermons de Tauler', *Éditions de la Vie Spirituelle*, pp. 128–129.

[4] I ought, however, to make mention of Mr. F. R. Hoare's article, 'The Darkness of Faith' in *The Dublin Review* (July 1932 and Jan. 1933), and of the discovery that Fr. Joseph Rickaby, S.J., held a view apparently very similar to my own—*v. In an Indian Abbey* (Burns and Oates, 1919), p. 27.

[5] Kegan Paul, 1905. Cf. *The Science of Prayer*, by L. de Besse, O.S.F.C. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1925), ch. xxx, 'Conversion and the Prayer of Faith'.

in this direction, and more than a hundred years ago P. Lacordaire hinted plainly at it in his famous seventeenth *Conférence de Notre Dame*.

The most striking confirmation of all was found only just in time for inclusion in this chapter. The French Carmelite theologian P. Philippe de la Trinité expresses the view that 'the Thomist and Suarezian position shows a clear discrepancy between its principles and its effective conclusion . . . what is at stake is the ontological realism of the supernatural order, but the realization of this seems very shadowy. . . . To explain the supernaturality of faith by its object we must go beyond the notional level of concepts and the activity of the judgement, while yet remaining in the line of the intelligence, for faith is an intellectual virtue; we must appeal to the ontological and immediate grasp of God as he is in himself. To find a term which is substantially supernatural we must go to subsistent Truth . . . to seize upon this term otherwise than by analogy, the intellect must, therefore, enter into a direct relation with it'.[1] The author goes on to relate living faith closely with charity on the lines suggested earlier in this book, and protests against an over-rigid adhesion to the letter of St. Thomas.

4. *Grace as the 'Seed of Glory'*

The position may be further strengthened by showing how the development of faith is treated by Catholic theologians. It has been noticed already that faith is the root from which the soul's supernatural activities originate, but it has not been shown in any detail that these activities are such as to give support to a thesis about the assent of faith. The revealed fact on which theologians base their account is that man is destined for the vision of God, not merely for some crepuscular awareness of his existence and attributes, but for a knowledge which transports and transforms. Moreover he is not only ordered extrinsically to an end of which he has only unintelligible reports, an unknown reward for his obedience to God's commands. He is already placed upon the lines

[1] *Études Carmelitaines*, Apr. 1937, pp. 175f. The real difficulties in the Thomist epistemology are becoming recognized outside the School as well as inside: for example, in Mr. Fairweather's remarkable book *The Word as Truth* (Lutterworth Press, 1944) a critique will be found which is in some respects strikingly similar to that which has been suggested in these pages, especially in regard to the 'original giving of revelation' (p. 25).

of his supernatural destiny, and he is to develop his supernatural powers here and now. Even on this earth, he is to know and love the Triune God as his last end, so that he may be fit for an eternal union with him. In brief, Christianity is not merely a moralism: it is a mysticism. So much we may find in our theologians. If, then, grace gives us supernatural power to know God and to love him, we may expect to find this power exercised in an initial fashion at the very moment when the gift is made. This has been already suggested. But how are we to interpret the doctrine that every Christian grows in supernatural knowledge of God in so far as sanctifying grace develops in him? Must every Christian be a 'mystic'?

This subject has been misconceived and misrepresented as few subjects have been in Christian theology. For a long period it almost vanished from the theological field and considerable prejudice still exists against it. The effective restoration in our day of the traditional doctrine is due largely to P. Garrigou-Lagrange. For twenty years his book *Perfection Chrétienne et Contemplation*[1] has been bearing fruit, and there is hardly a recent (orthodox) spiritual writer of any importance who does not show, directly or indirectly, his influence. The debt which we owe him for this great renewal is immeasurable. The title page of the book states its essential thesis in the directest way: 'Infused contemplation, the normal prelude of the heavenly vision, is like heaven itself accessible to all, through docility to the Holy Spirit, to prayer and to the Cross.' Supernatural union with God, 'mystical' contemplation, is thus the normal development of Grace. The fact that so many do not attain to it, are even unaware that it has anything to do with them, is not to the purpose; the goal remains. 'Contemplation' does not mean seeing 'visions' or having sensational experiences of any kind; these are accidental phenomena which may or may not appear at certain stages of spiritual growth. The substance of the matter is the soul's union with God, his supernatural transforming presence. It is not necessarily perceptible as such; often it causes in consciousness only a 'feeling of absence'. This, then, is no dangerous illuminism; it does not reject but presupposes a true asceticism. Christian perfection lies in 'mystical' union.

[1] *Éditions de la Vie Spirituelle,* Saint Maximin (Var) 1923. This has appeared in a reliable English translation (*Christian Perfection,* Herder, 1937). The abridged form of the book has also appeared in English (*The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life,* Burns Oates, 1938).

The view now commonly held by theologians is that 'contemplation' is not exceptional, the privilege of a few specially chosen souls, which the 'ordinary' Christian must not look for. The opposite view, which was fashionable not so long ago, compared it with the charismatic powers granted to the Apostles: it was something extraordinary, miraculous. The present tendency is not only to make it normal, that is, to see in it the development of habitual (sanctifying) grace, but to postulate the influence of its activity earlier and earlier in the soul's progress, and to lay stress on its obscurity in these stages.[1] This tendency, which once seemed startling, has become respectable. Might it not become respectable to claim this explanation for the first act of faith?

'Mystical contemplation', writes P. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'is nothing but the plenitude of the life of faith.'[2] Why, then, does he not use this principle to throw light on our problem of faith? For we have seen[3] that his attempted solution of it is on other lines. The answer to this question lies in what seems an inconsistency in the modern Thomist account of 'mysticism'.[4] Faith in this account is the 'radical principle' of contemplation. But a certain distinction is introduced, as the account proceeds, between supernatural contemplation and the union with God in which lies Christian perfection. We should have supposed, from what P. Garrigou-Lagrange has already told us, that such a distinction would be illusory. But we now find that the principle of union is not faith but charity, or more exactly, it is grace through charity, the property of grace, which is this principle. No one is going to deny that Christian perfection is to be found in charity. But there seems to be a factitious opposition here between charity and faith. Charity and living faith, by general agreement, cannot exist without one another. Charity is the flower of faith, not something heterogeneous which takes over from it. But in the teaching of the modern Thomist school charity together with the gifts of the Holy Ghost must intervene to produce mystical union, and this gives a non-intellectualist turn to all this account. The will seems

[1] This does not mean that the 'Dark Night of the Senses' regularly manifests itself at the very outset of spiritual endeavour; such a view would promote ill-considered direction.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 77, E.T., p. 71. [3] In Chapter II of this Part.

[4] The texts on which the following summary is based are set out in the first Appendix, together with a fuller discussion.

to replace the intellect as the principle of specification; Christian perfection consists in loving God rather than in knowing him. And the knowledge of him which is allowed to us is apparently based on an awareness of our love of him, this love itself being 'infused' into the will without a corresponding infusion into the intellect. It is not surprising that our 'contemplation' of God proves to be a 'negative knowledge' or a knowledge not of God himself but of his 'effects'.

This rapid sketch of what may be called Thomist 'voluntarism' in theology will be filled in later. It has been given here only to show that P. Garrigou-Lagrange has his reasons, whatever we may think of them, for not applying his doctrine of the 'life of faith' to the problem of faith. What we are chiefly concerned with in this section is to show how that doctrine could be used to relieve the problem. A passage from P. Gardeil may be quoted to bring this out: 'In the indivisible unity of the spiritual soul, the *Mens* . . . the divine substance is physically present, as in all things, by the presence of immensity . . .' but in the soul which has grace a fresh relation arises 'founded not only on the divine causality, but on the essential ordination of grace to unite us intimately, by the effective knowledge and love which emanate from it, to the God who is substantially present within us.'[1] P. Gardeil's account of supernatural knowledge is more serviceable than that of P. Garrigou-Lagrange. Sanctifying grace is a 'radical power' to know God as he is in himself, not only in his effects.[2] And, finally, we may quote Dom Stolz's admission that 'an immediate apprehension of God, even without any vision of the divine essence, can be acknowledged from a theological standpoint as possible'.[3] The admission is no less valuable for appearing reluctant.

5. *P. Maréchal and the Witness of the Mystics*

It has been already remarked that P. Maréchal maintained the thesis of a supernatural *intuition* of God in the 'mystical' life. It will

[1] *La Structure de l'Ame et l'Expérience Mystique*, Gabalda, 1937, Vol. II, p. 64.

[2] This subject also is pursued in the first Appendix.

[3] *The Doctrine of Spiritual Perfection*, Eng. trans. of *Théologie de Mystik* by Dom Aidan Williams; Herder 1938, pp. 161–162. This book links up the central thesis of P. Garrigou-Lagrange and P. Gardeil with the patristic theology of the Redemption and with sacramental theology in general. The Dominican writers, in the works mentioned above, had not sufficiently emphasized the Christocentric context to which the thesis clearly belongs.

be useful to conclude this chapter by showing that he means by this a non-conceptual supernatural knowledge which is a positive and direct (though obscure) awareness of God. This occurs in a clear-cut form only in 'higher mystical contemplation'. But it has appeared that there is nothing to prevent us from saying that it also occurs in an obscurer form in the assent of faith in such a way as to solve the problem of faith's certainty. 'Higher mystical contemplation', writes P. Maréchal, 'is neither a sense-perception nor an imaginative projection, nor a discursive knowledge, but, strictly speaking, an *intellectual intuition*, one of those intuitions whose exact type we do not in our ordinary experience possess . . . in its highest degree mystical contemplation does not appear precisely as an effacement of the personality before the more and more exclusive brightness of the divine presence, but rather as the *union* in which the personality, far from being annihilated, is *upraised* and *transformed*. . . . St. John of the Cross supplies us with the two great "psychological" reasons which bring the mystics to attribute to their state an *immediate* divine origin—namely, the reality of an *essential presence*, "nullo interposito medio"; it is firstly their apparent *passivity* and personal insufficiency in the bringing about of these states; secondly the very *mode of the knowledge* which is then communicated to them, a mode not only extraordinary but in contradiction, as it would seem, with a fundamental psychological law, the necessity of the *intellectio in phantasmate* . . . the fact involved is that of an "*intellectual intuition*", of an imageless vision of God.'[1]

[1] *Études sur la Psychologie des Mystiques*, by P. Maréchal, S.J., Bruges, 1924, pp. 160–163; E.T. by Algar Thorold, Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1927, pp. 121–123. (The translation has been used for the passages quoted.) The italics are the author's. This work by a distinguished psychologist and philosopher is of the greatest service; it is fully documented. The influence of P. Maréchal's thought will have been apparent to those familiar with it throughout this book. It must be understood that what is accepted from him here is by way of complement to the views already accepted from others. That is, it must be seen in the light of P. Garrigou-Lagrange's theory of the 'normality' of supernatural contemplation, of P. Gardeil's thesis that grace is a 'presence' of God in the soul, destined to become objectified, and of Dom Stolz's insistence that this means union with Christ. Thus we may obtain a true synthesis. If we accepted the affirmations of one of these writers without those of the rest, this picture would become falsified. This must be enough as an indication of the coherent account of Christian mysticism which seems still to be lacking. Obviously, it is not the business of this chapter to give such an account, but only to claim that a certain form of knowledge is theologically and philosophically an acceptable postulate.

That the 'fundamental law' just mentioned carries within it the possibility of being transcended has been the philosophical inspiration of P. Maréchal's previous argument. A later passage is too significant for our present purposes to be passed over: 'We admit to a deep embarrassment in qualifying the writer who in the descriptions of the mystics does not observe, beside the affirmation of negative characteristics, the if possible clearer affirmation of the positive character of ecstasy.... The only Catholic contemplatives who at first sight might seem to be describing a void ecstasy, a "lapse into nothingness", are the great German and Flemish mystics of the end of the Middle Ages. Their Dionysian terminology is "negative" in the extreme... it would be childish of us to allow ourselves to be imposed upon by these expressions....'[1] The summary of P. Maréchal's argument here is as follows: 'Two affirmations stand out from the descriptions of the Christian mystics which, according to them, express data of immediate experience, yet data, on the other hand, constant and universal enough to escape the accusation of being purely subjective and individual illusion. They are:

> '1. The affirmation of negative characters which radically separate the ecstatic state from the normal or abnormal psychological states of ordinary life; the effacement of the empirical Ego, the leaving aside of imagery and spatiality, the absence of all enumerable multiplicity, that is to say, in a word, the cessation of conceptual thought.
>
> 'Ecstasy is *negative*.
>
> '2. On the other hand, the affirmation that this cessation of conceptual thought is not total unconsciousness, but rather the enlargement and intensification or even a higher form of intellectual activity.
>
> 'Ecstasy is *positive*.

'Now these two affirmations are contradictory on all imaginable hypotheses save one; namely, that the human intelligence is able, in certain conditions, to attain *an intuition which is proper to itself,* or, in other words, that the intelligence, instead of constructing its object analogically and approximately from materials borrowed

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 242–244; E.T. pp. 191–193 (here P. Maréchal has chiefly in mind the interpretations of agnostic psychologists).

from the sensibility, can sometimes attain that object by an immediate assimilation.'[1]

Among the illustrations chosen by P. Maréchal are the following:

'When the most high God cometh into the rational soul, it is at times given her to see him, and she seeth him within her, without any bodily form, and she seeth him more clearly than one mortal man can see another; for the eyes of the soul behold a fullness, *spiritual not bodily*, about which I can say nothing at all, for words and imagination fail me.' (*Life of B. Angela of Foligno*, ch. 52.)

'This interior wisdom, so simple, general and spiritual, enters not into an intellect entangled and covered over by *any forms or images* subject to sense.' (St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night*, ii. 17.)

'In mystical theology . . . the understanding ceases from its acts, because God suspends it. . . . We must neither imagine nor think that we can of ourselves bring about this suspension . . . nor must we allow the understanding to cease from its acts; for in that case we shall be stupid and cold, and the result will be neither the one nor the other. For when our Lord suspends the understanding and makes it cease from its acts, he puts before it that which astonishes and occupies it; so that, without making any reflections, it shall comprehend in a moment more than we could comprehend in many years with all the efforts in the world.' (St. Teresa, *Life*, ch. xii.)

'Above the reason, in the depths of the intelligence, the simple eye is always open, it contemplates and gazes at the light with a pure gaze, enlightened by the light itself, eye against eye, mirror against mirror, image against image.' (Ruysbroeck, *The Mirror of Eternal Salvation*, ed. Underhill, London, 1916, t.i. p. 141.)

'The spirit is transported high above all the faculties into a void of immense solitude whereof no mortal can adequately speak. It is the mysterious darkness wherein is concealed the limitless Good.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 245–246; E.T. pp. 193–194. The section is headed 'Ecstasy is the synthesis of an empirical negativity and a transcendent positivity'. The argument demands that the words 'or even (*même*) a higher form of intellectual activity' in the penultimate paragraph should be taken to mean that a higher form *is* postulated. We may regret the word 'ecstasy' (with its inevitable connotation of extravagance) for a process which seems to be operative at a low tension even when it is not experimentally distinguishable from the natural processes which accompany it. P. Maréchal's view of *natural* knowledge, as we have seen, has been charged (not unreasonably) with 'conceptualism'.

To such an extent we are admitted and absorbed into something that is one, simple, divine, illimitable, that we seem no longer distinguishable from it. I speak not of the reality, but of the appearance, of the impression that is felt. In this unity the feeling of multiplicity disappears. This obscurity is a light to which no created intelligence can arrive by its own nature.' (Tauler, *First Sermon for the Second Sunday after Epiphany.*)

'The mind sees God. *It does not accomplish this by denying* or withdrawing anything from him, as when we say: God is not limited nor finite. Neither is it by affirming something of him, attributing it to him, as when we say: God is good and wise. But it is by regarding the divine greatness without any admixture of anything else, in the tranquillity of a calm day. Certainly, O reader, when you see the light with the bodily eyes, you do not arrive thereat by a comparison of ideas.... You simply see the light. In the same way the soul, in this degree of contemplation, *affirms nothing, denies nothing, attributes nothing, avoids nothing,* but in complete repose she *sees* God. It will be said: This is astonishing or rather unbelievable.... I admit that it is astonishing. The fact, however, is very certain.' (Fr. Alvarez de Paz, *De inquisit. pacis,* V, 3rd. art., ch. 14.)

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALISM

1. *The Intellect and the Emotions*

Our enquiry into the act of faith has led us to assert that intellect has the primacy in religion no less than in philosophy. This is not a popular thesis. Even the Thomists, as we have seen, do not profess it in a thorough-going fashion. So a final chapter is called for as a vindication of the general position which has been adopted. There is no question of suffering a defeat in argument on such an issue: anti-intellectualism does not cease to be self-refuting when we move beyond the field of 'pure philosophy'. But there are a good many apparent loose ends to be tied up before we can claim to have made a coherent picture of fundamental psychology.

It is common form to say that intellectual activity is only a part of life, and this is plainly true. But such a remark is usually bound up with a suggestion that this activity is subordinated to an 'act of the person' which transcends it. Even when it is allowed that man's ultimate perfection lies in the intellectual vision of God, it is still maintained that the standard of his perfection during his life on earth is not to be stated in terms of intellect. The 'act of the person', in this life at least, is compounded of will and sense-activity and emotion as well as intelligence. It is not to be indicated by any one of them at the expense of any other.

Let us consider first the claims of emotion. It may seem obvious enough that the emotions are indices of some activity more fundamental than themselves. They register the smooth running, or the reverse, of powers which are more deep-seated. Yet it does mean something to say that the 'emotional side' of a man's nature is undeveloped. The difficulty, however, yields very quickly to analysis. Such a man, we find on reflection, has too seldom known anything worth knowing and so capable of giving rise to a strong and genuine emotion; or, it may be, his knowledge is distracted and superficial. Again, when we describe someone as 'emotional' we sometimes refer to a form of selfishness (or restricted vision) which makes a mountain out of a mole-hill, or to an artificial or

insincere emotion. 'Lack of sensitiveness', although no doubt bound up with the condition of the bodily organism (so at least St. Thomas thought), refers to an intellectual hebetude. The emotions, then, will not provide any clue to problems of the human person, that is, they will not of themselves reveal to us any part of the ultimate truth about the development which is proper to man. They do not combine on equal terms with the intellective and the conative powers to give us the key to his life.

It is difficult to say how such a conclusion can be avoided by anyone who does not confuse the *intellectus* with the *ratio*. In fact, when 'intellectualism' is used as a term of reproach it always proves to mean 'rationalism'; the profound sense of 'intellect' is simply unrecognized. It becomes a duty, therefore, to insist on this profound sense: words should be used with their full meanings so long as there is any hope of preserving these—there is no need yet to coin other words to refer to the soul's power of intuitive union, of spiritual growth.

Let us apply this result to the current language of artistic and literary criticism. In this field it might seem that imagination is the most important of the human faculties and 'feeling' the most important of human activities. Here we may turn to Mr. E. I. Watkin for the answer: 'What is here miscalled imagination should have been called intuition . . . the identification denies a false opposition, persistent throughout modern thought, between the concrete and obscure intuition to which the name "imagination" is too often given and the abstract and clear, but sometimes abstract and obscure, intuition and discrimination of intuitions termed discursive reason. For the former is perceived to be but a more exalted form of an operation exemplified also in the latter.'[1] One might prefer to describe discursive reason as the power of correlating evidence by which the mind moves from one intuition to another. And one may suggest that the terms on which 'abstract' intuition bears, the universal features of our objects, are no clearer in principle than the particular features on which the artist's mind more especially focuses. But Mr. Watkin has brought out the point that the current language of 'feeling' is based on a false theory of knowledge. He adds the sound comment that 'concrete intuition' is closely connected with the imagination in the proper sense of that word: that is, 'it does not dispense with sen-

[1] *The Balance of Truth*, Hollis & Carter, p. 71.

sible images' of its object.[1] Hence, too, the tendency to describe the whole process as imaginative.

Mr. T. S. Eliot, then, seems to cause unnecessary difficulties when he writes of the function of poetry that, as it 'is not intellectual but emotional, it cannot be defined adequately in intellectual terms'.[2] It will be profitable to juxtapose to this a *rapprochement* between poetry and metaphysics suggested by Dr. F. R. Leavis. The situation is an interesting one, because Dr. Leavis usually falls into the error (most pardonable in our day) of judging philosophy by its abuses, whereas Mr. Eliot would be considered (by contrast, at least) a near-Thomist. And on this occasion Dr. Leavis successfully avoids the false opposition to be found in Mr. Eliot's essays, in a comment on Mr. Eliot's own poetry: 'A strength patently recognizable as of the same kind as that which led us to speak of "thought" in Blake's poetry is there in Eliot's in a more developed form, integral with a sustained and complex process, exploratory, analytic, and organizing, that is unquestionably thought in the same sense as the thought of the metaphysician. The great difference between the thought of the metaphysical treatise and the thought of the Four Quartets lies in the genius that enables the poet to refuse with such hardly credible vigour and success the ready-made, the illusory and the spectral in the way of conceptual apparatus, and to keep his abstractions so fully charged with the concrete of experience and his thinking so unquestionably faithful to it. Such precision and efficiency of thought is possible only to a great poet, and this poetry brings home vividly to us that to think effectively about experience is to think with it and in it (which is why no intellectual drill in itself, however responsive and athletic the trainee, and no mere acquisition, however thorough, of technique, method and apparatus, can generate vital thinking or are likely to conduce to it).'[3]

This admirable passage shows us the way to relieve the false opposition between art and metaphysics which so often obstructs the full meaning of 'intellectualism'. We must not oppose meta-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 72. (Mr. Watkin refers to *internal* images here.) It is significant that on the following page he is led to enter an energetic protest against 'rationalism' among Catholics in regard to the act of faith. Readers of his books will notice that his system of psychology is in some respects closely akin to that sketched in these chapters and in others sharply opposed to it.

[2] *Selected Essays*, p. 38.

[3] 'Thought and Emotional Quality', *Scrutiny*, Spring 1945, p. 71.

physics to 'experience'. The modern fashion of using 'experience' to refer only to sense-experience is highly misleading. We should take a hint from P. Picard who refers to self-knowledge as a 'metaphysical experience'.[1] And we should recognize that a metaphysical treatise is largely concerned with clearing off rubbish and isolating the objects of metaphysical contemplation. When the metaphysician gives us positive light on these objects he often becomes indistinguishable from the poet. He uses his materials for expression, which are all based on his knowledge of bodily things, in such a way that they are wholly steeped in his intuition. And by the same token the poet's words which we think of as springing from 'particular experience' sometimes take on an absolute quality.

The literary or artistic critic is fond of urging that, although we may speak of 'intuition' in matters of art, we distinguish it from its expression (verbal or otherwise) at a level of human experience which is not ultimate. 'The intuition is the expression' is the best formula, so they tell us, as far as there is one. We may agree that the artist's intuition is found in the sensible, and that this finding *is* the expression for all necessary purposes of the critic as critic. But it does not follow from this that an intuition which claims to pass *through* the sensible to the purely intelligible must be, if not illusory, at best impoverished. 'Abstraction' (in the sense of 'leaving things out') is so foreign to the true nature of metaphysics that we may call all the special sciences 'abstractive' in comparison with it. The metaphysician does not 'leave out the world': he finds 'God in the world and the world in God'.

2. *The finalization of the lower powers*

The person is the subject of all the acts which are attributed to the various human faculties; the unity of the person carries along with it real complexity. These are Thomist commonplaces. But it is easy to describe the act of the person in a way which attacks the principle of intellect's primacy: the union of body and soul must not be emphasized to such a degree as to blur the true ordering of the one to the other, and sense-knowledge must not be treated as if it were not merely a *sine qua non* of man's ultimate achievement, but an essential part of it. There might seem to be a sense, indeed,

[1] In his *Problème Critique Fondamentale* (Archives de Philosophie, Beauchesne, 1923).

in which it is such a part, if we believe in the Resurrection of the body. But we cannot suppose that the Beatific Vision is itself enhanced by the reunion of the body with the soul.[1] And the danger which is our present concern is of treating sense-knowledge as an indispensable partner of intellectual knowledge to the extent that intellect *could* not be truly itself—at any stage—without its co-operation.

In the light of the earlier chapters the question takes the following form: is a knowledge of our own bodies in contact with others, or a knowledge which is based on that knowledge, an indispensable part of man's highest activity? First we must repeat a distinction. All knowledge is based on this knowledge of our own bodies in the sense that such knowledge is a *conditio sine qua non* for the genesis of our intellective activity. But there is no justification for the assertion that the intellect must always fall short of its proper development if it has no sense-grounded data to bear on at later stages. It is obvious, indeed, if our previous conclusions are sound, that our knowledge of God implies an 'abstraction' in the sense of a passing beyond sense-grounded data, although we need not exclude our bodily objects when we know God and although we can never come to know him in the first instance until we have first known them. Once we have known and accepted him, once we are set on the lines of our supernatural destiny, the increase of our knowledge of him is in no way dependent upon an increase in our knowledge of bodies. It results from a direct presentation of himself to the intellect, and there is no reason why this presentation should not occur when the soul has been separated from the body. Sense-knowledge remains a subordinate element in the human picture on a total view of it.

The previous section has already suggested the reason why we are inclined to make exaggerated claims for sense-knowledge. It is because the intellect in this life is most at home in the sensible field and its easy exercise in that field generates powerful emotions. This exercise and these emotions are not despised by the 'intellectualist'—far from it. He sees in them a valuable propaedeutic for that union in which man is consummated. Moreover the intellect is not undergoing in this field a sort of training course which has no direct connexion with its final achievement. It is feeding

[1] Rather we must suppose that a lower level of experience is thereby added—why, we cannot precisely tell, but somehow (it must be) *ad bonum universi.*

its desire for its own unification by unifying its sense-presented materials. It is the same to say once again that it is 'knowing God in the world'. Nor does the 'intellectualist' despise man's experience on the merely biological level. The awareness of purely bodily well-being, of the due performance of biological functions, is (if it is a full and enlightened awareness) the recognition of divine orderings as well as a dispositive cause of mental well-being.

Thus there is no attack on an integral humanism to see in a supra-sensible knowledge the final goal of human endeavour. There is no reason for looking askance at the claim which is so unambiguously made by classical mysticism to a communion with God in which the bodily powers play no direct and intrinsic part. We must not suggest that the mystics have misinterpreted their experience or that the world of knowledge which they describe to us marks an abnormal transitional stage. It is a real foretaste of the everlasting intellectual vision.

Man's powers, then, are hierarchically ordered. His spiritual power of union is his supreme endowment, and with this (and for its purposes) the rest are united in the real unity of a complex organism. We must not fall into the temptation of thinking that the 'act of the person' includes both our bodily and our spiritual powers in such a way as to *merge* them into some higher unity. In the unity of the person the former are *finalized* by the latter. We cannot just talk of a co-ordination of all the faculties as man's programme. This conclusion implies not a scorn of the senses but a frank recognition of the transcendent claims of the spirit, the positive side of the Platonist and Augustinian tradition, which St. Thomas continued.[1] It has been well said that St. Thomas's account of the angels is the completion of his human psychology—from what source could he draw his materials for it save from his own self-knowledge?

3. *The dynamism of the intellect*

We shall be told perhaps that it is strange to appeal to St. Augustine in support of Christian intellectualism, and that we shall discover in his writings the most serious objections to such a

[1] P. Chenu, in an article ('Ratio Supérior et Inférior') which is highly relevant to the present theme, speaks of an 'Aristotelianizing of Thomism whose consequences have been so unfortunate' (*v. The Downside Review*, Oct. 1946, p. 263).

doctrine. Is not St. Augustine the chief upholder of the claims of the will? So at least P. Jansen thinks. We have seen in an earlier chapter that P. Jansen does not make faith and 'vision' heterogeneous, yet in the same article from which we were quoting he reaches a general conclusion of a 'voluntarist' kind.[1] It will be worth while to consider how he reaches it so as to illustrate a tendency which is often present in modern theology. P. Jansen is reviewing P. Chenu's work *Psychologie de la Foi dans la théologie du XIIIe siècle*; he accepts the author's remark that there is no irreducible heterogeneity between intellectual *knowledge* and religious *feeling* (*sentiment*), yet he goes on to doubt 'whether the language of the first can suffice to express all the riches of the second. Perhaps at the root of the divergence lies the old controversy between the Thomists and the Scotists: To which of two master faculties are we to assign the primacy, to intellect or to will? Which occupation of the soul is absolutely speaking the more perfect, knowing or loving? Without wishing to enter deeply into a debate which is in origin no doubt of the psychological rather than of the logical order, I incline to think that the mystics will always lean towards the latter alternative; they make no mistake in justifying their opinion by the authority of the Doctor of Charity. *Amor intrat, ubi scientia foris stat*'.

Scientia foris stat, we should answer, but not *sapientia.* For *amor* and *sapientia* imply one another. True wisdom is inevitably accompanied by true love; 'science' is only a pale shadow of this. The spiritual powers of knowledge and love are interdependent; they are not distinct from one another with the sort of distinction with which they are both distinguished from the bodily powers; these spiritual powers 'flow' from the soul's essence. The language of the 'higher synthesis' has some meaning in the present context. Curiously enough, P. Jansen himself—in the same paragraph—gives us this clue. St. Augustine's system, he tells us, 'is above all a religious philosophy, a *wisdom,* a *sapida sapientia* rather than a philosophy; it is a fusion of Platonist intellectualism and mysticism. Didn't Augustine define the philosopher as *amator Dei*? It is only by the "superior reason" or *mens* that the rational soul is raised to the contemplation of the eternal truths—and, again, not every rational soul; only "those who are pure and holy" seem to him fit

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1934, pp. 604–615. The quotations which follow are from the conclusion of this article.

for this vision, those "in whom the inner eye which perceives these truths is well disposed, clean and clear like the objects which it seeks to see".[1] In other words, it is upon *right will,* upon *love of the good* that knowledge of the truth depends. Doesn't this mean that Augustine asserts for willing a primacy of honour over knowing?'[2] We must answer that 'truth' depends on 'right will' in the sense that truth cannot be gained without it. But truth is *what* is gained —and *finis coronat opus.*

This result seems very obvious. Will is supremely important as the disposition for the final end—but that is all. Nevertheless the 'dynamism' of the intellect presents us with puzzles which we have not yet faced. It is all very well to assert St. Thomas's general principle *voluntas consequitur intellectum,*[3] and to point to the Beatific Vision in which the intellect seems to unite the will with itself and 'desire' gives place to 'fruition'. But in the present life does not our 'desire', after all, *in fact* outstrip our knowledge? For we *want* to know something which we do *not* yet know. Isn't this the difficulty to which St. Augustine is pointing?[4] We may say that we desire fuller knowledge *because we know* that there is more to know. But this is only to state the same problem in different words. How do we know that there is more to know? Not merely by extrinsic report—our own experience declares this to us. Is it then that we know the tendency of our minds towards fuller knowledge, that our minds are revealed to themselves in their exercise and announce their own dissatisfaction? This line of thought certainly brings before us the interpenetration of will and intellect: the intellect seems to have its own tendency here as its object.

Yet we need not fall into obscurantism on this account. Pascal reminds us that we should not be seeking if we had not already found. Desire does not move into territory which is really unknown. We do know God; we know his nature (however dimly), not just *that* he exists. We also know that our knowledge of him is hampered; we cannot *attend* to him as we would. But if we try

[1] *De diversis quaest. octoginta tribus,* q. 46.

[2] P. Jansen refers in a footnote to St. Augustine's growing conviction that men are 'nothing but wills' (*voluntates*). But we must not take this in a narrow technical sense.

[3] *S. Th.* I, 19, 1.

[4] The tenth book of the *Confessions* shows us that this is a real problem.

to attend to him, our knowledge does grow. We know that our knowledge of God can receive an increase because it increases in our own experience. And our knowledge of God carries with it the realization that he could never be *comprehended* (exhaustively known) by created powers. This is indeed a mysterious knowledge. But it must not lead us to say that the will (as 'desire') *reveals* him, showing us the 'more' which we do not know. It is rather that will (as 'choice') obscures him, because it falls back on the love of his creatures. God offers himself to the mind's eye, but it hardly sees him—it is too busy about other things. What it knows it loves; what it desires is rather to be less busy: *porro unum est necessarium ... Maria optimam partem elegit.*

It will be useful to compare the following passage from P. de Jaegher's introduction to his *Anthology of Mysticism.*[1] 'There are two elements in all knowledge *that does not exhaust its object.* There is the positive element, the qualities actually perceived; and the negative, the clear consciousness that our knowledge is not adequate, that the object loved is more and worth more than we are able to see. The will goes beyond the positive element and forms a bridge across the gulf which separates us from the beloved and his "complete knowability"; this bridge is precisely the negative element itself, that precious "unknowingness", as it has been called.' P. de Jaegher is led to refer to mystical knowledge as though it were essentially negative in character, and to attribute to the will, as opposed to the intellect, a power of uniting us with God. But the mystics do not mean this when they speak of 'unknowingness'. It is true that our knowledge of God contains an awareness that he is indescribably *more* than we yet know. But it is in the increase of positive knowledge that this 'negative' awareness arises. And the increase of positive knowledge is what the mystics mean. When they appear to deny it, they deny *scientia*—the natural modes of knowing as opposed to the supernatural; they do not deny *sapientia.* When they tell us of a 'divine truth in the depths of the soul', affecting the source of both will and intellect,[2] they point to our true psychology. Here as always, it is the *man* who both knows and wills (the faculties are not things, but functions of things), and he does both together.

It is natural that the mystics should use the language of will to

[1] Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1935, p. 9.

[2] Tauler, Blosius, St. John of the Cross *passim* (to choose a few examples).

describe this knowledge: they are afraid that they may be thought to refer to a 'knowledge by description' which is all that the theologians might seem to allow them. In that sense of 'know' we can indeed love God more than we know him.[1] But this is an impoverished sense. We may restate what the mystics say in the following form: we may have a considerable knowledge of God 'by acquaintance' without a considerable knowledge of propositions about him.

No one, perhaps, has insisted so strongly as André Bremond on the 'darkness' of contemplative prayer. Yet he has written: 'The quietude which seizes on God is thus much more intelligent, that is, more fully knowing, than the reason which proves him. Let us leave the technicians to dispute the rival claims of love and intelligence.... For us, this "immediate seizing of God" is at the same time knowledge and love.'[2]

4. *Animus and Anima—Fr. D'Arcy*[3]

In his latest book *The Mind and Heart of Love*[4] Fr. D'Arcy considers the apparently contrasting tendencies in man towards 'possession' on the one hand and 'ecstasy' on the other. The first statement of his own view occurs in a passage in which he is relating the distinction between *animus* and *anima* to that between Eros and Agape and commenting on Nygren's rejection of Eros: 'He (Nygren) thinks that only by divine Agape can the soul be unselfish. It would seem more likely that below the divine Agape there is to be found a movement in the soul which balances the egocentric and centripetal urge by a centrifugal love which carries it beyond what reason clearly delineates . . . This, in fact, is the solution which I hope to establish.'[5] So far, then, it would seem that a balance of *animus* and *anima* is to be the solution. Later we read of a 'perfect correspondence between giving and taking, self-regard and self-surrender, animus and anima'.[6] It is the apparent opposition between self-love and the love of God with which Fr. D'Arcy is supremely concerned. His answer is

[1] In fact our love of him cannot be based on a mere knowledge by description; as we have seen, without *some* knowledge of God 'by acquaintance' knowledge by description is meaningless.

[2] *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France*, vol. xi, p. 399.

[3] This section is reproduced from *The Downside Review*. Oct. 1946.

[4] Faber and Faber. [5] p. 200. [6] p. 245.

hesitant. He gives us, apparently as his last word, some extracts from essays by P. Rousselot, which are, indeed, of high interest, but in which, as Fr. D'Arcy himself points out, 'the thought is incomplete.'[1]

It is curious that Fr. D'Arcy should add some pages later a remark of Rousselot's which does seem the clue to the definitive answer. '*Since it is God who is our Beatitude, and not we his, our perfection consists still more in receiving him than in giving ourselves.*'[2] All that Fr. D'Arcy has to say about this is that it 'may well be decisive and final', with the reservation that Rousselot's view may be after all simply that of St. Thomas—and St. Thomas's answer is offered to us later with apparent approval: 'it is nobler to desire and love God than to know him.'[3] Fr. D'Arcy's conclusion, then, seems a syncretism, a combining of factors, not a radical explanation. 'We can compare human life to a stream which flows to the ocean and at the same time by its own motion makes a floating island which instead of perishing grows ever more beautiful as a piece of nature. The love of self is not swept away by the love of God; it forms a nucleus which develops ever more richly its own form, the greater the sweep of love beyond it. The love of self is a true love; it is necessary for the permanent selfhood and splendour of our finite beauty; it is not just part of another love, it is a co-efficient with it: the animus and the anima give each other mutual assistance and love; the essential self and the existential self together make the "I", the person'.[4] Here Fr. D'Arcy seems hovering on the verge of a final answer; so too in the conclusion of an earlier chapter: 'there is the sheer giving and ecstatic happiness in being possessed by everlasting love, and concomitantly with this and fusing with it is the joy of possessing God as he is by means of the beatific vision.'[5] But these are only incidental hints: there is no drawing out of the unity which we glimpse in them, no insistence that in the end there is no duality. We are left with two tendencies or 'selves' or 'loves' in a precarious alliance.

We seem to need a more full-blooded 'intellectualism'. 'Intellectualism' refers in its fullest meaning to the holding together of two doctrines: that it is man's power of union with God that is the key to the whole range of his activity and that this is a power to receive in an immaterial manner. The soul is *quoddamodo omnia,*

[1] p. 281. [2] Fr. D'Arcy's italics. [3] p. 306.
[4] p. 304. [5] p. 233

capax Dei—that is the pivot on which everything must turn; when we refer to the soul as 'intellective' we refer to this—it is accepted language. But it is the same to say that the soul, in so far as united, *loves*, if we mean by that word that it is wholly surrendered to God, turned wholly to him. The soul's fundamental act of union is both possession and submission. No doubt we must distinguish the soul as will from the soul as intellect. The desire for union is not union itself. But an opposition between knowing and loving, although it has its uses at certain levels, must not be ultimate for our thought. We may say that a possession which is not also submission is imperfect knowledge, that possession without submission is imperfect love: it is better to say that both are imperfect love-knowledge or knowledge-love. Fr. D'Arcy has brought the elements of the problem into relation with one another, he has even suggested the road to the solution, but he has not brought his readers to the end of it. Until we reach the end of it we are still in danger of falling back into an arid rationalism on the one hand or an uncontrolled emotionalism on the other, as Fr. D'Arcy himself has warned us. We become mere special scientists or mere sentimentalists if we miss the *wisdom* which controls and explains our whole being.

Philosophy used to mean the love of wisdom. What does Fr. D'Arcy mean by it? Let us consider the following passage: 'The scientific and philosophic lives are of high degree, but they are not the highest. They tend to translate all objects, even persons, into inanimate things. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, whether in respect of ultimate principles or in a special field, is a high vocation, but it is at the cost of the living person. Only a part of man is engaged, and once the reason goes to work by itself, it wishes to have mastery over its subject and material, to reduce it to its own categories, to abstract it and extract the essence.'[1]

Doesn't Fr. D'Arcy accept an impoverished meaning for philosophy? Does the mind only *reason* and abstract? If so, then we must summon some other power to fill up the gap. But this would be to accept a false problem. Philosophy has not the last word—theology has that. But philosophy reveals the fundamental laws of man's nature, and these are not abrogated by theology when it reveals the full scope of their exercise.

[1] p. 226.

5. *The Science of the Saints*

Fr. D'Arcy has earned our gratitude by putting into currency in various places the thought of P. Rousselot as expressed in his *Intellectualisme de S. Thomas.* Rousselot's own account of *faith* we have found unsatisfactory. But his insistence in this book on the intuitive nature of intellect, to which Fr. D'Arcy has so often referred, has seemed to be the key to all our problems. And in a passage which is strangely overlooked Rousselot himself suggests our answer: 'Mysticism crowns intellectualism . . . whatever reason one might have for opposing the two terms elsewhere, in the field of orthodox mysticism and the classical philosophy of Catholicism no opposition is more superficial and false. There is one thing about St. Thomas which may surprise us, that he did not think of bringing out more clearly, in treating of infused contemplation, the more exquisite intellectuality granted here to the spiritual life.'[1] And a quotation follows from St. Thomas which contains this doctrine in germ: '*Caritas habet rationem quasi dirigentem in actu suo, vel magis intellectum.*'[2] In this passage Rousselot accepts St. Thomas's regular doctrine that contemplation is the efficacious means rather than the foretaste of the final end. But he adds: 'this last remark does not prevent the practical identification, for St. Thomas, of contemplation and the perfect life'. We may wonder whether this is a consistent interpretation of St. Thomas,[3] but we need not hesitate to follow Rousselot's own thought which clearly emerges in these last pages of his famous work.

P. Garrigou-Lagrange, as we have seen, is considered most deservedly the great upholder in our day of contemplation as the norm of Christian perfection. Yet Rousselot's brief mention of the subject here strikes a deeper note. Intellect is *life* in its highest form. Here is no factitious contrast between love and intellect, no

[1] p. 196 (E.T. p. 190). [2] 3d. 27q. 2a, 3 ad 2.

[3] The following passage from Dom Stolz may be profitably compared with Rousselot's account of St. Thomas's position: 'For the Fathers, *gnosis* bestowed assimilation to God, deification, whereas St. Thomas resorts to or rather presupposes charity for that purpose, and that because he considers wisdom, like faith, as being in itself purely intellectual. The fact that, in this matter, St. Thomas has recourse to charity reveals a conscious effort to guard against an excessively intellectual concept of Christian life.' (*The Doctrine of Spiritual Perfection,* p. 187.)

shrinking from the 'realism' of mystical knowledge. Above all, the subject is seen in its broadest bearings, illuminating and co-ordinating every aspect of human activity. For a sane moral philosophy perfection lies in the full development of our nature; our nature[1] is to know God and to love him in this world as well as in the next. This is the *norm* which must direct our efforts. This is the end not only of our religious exercises, of all that complex system of rites and ordinances which seems so arbitrary to those outside it, but of each so-called trivial human action. Most of us must 'forsake Rachael for Lia' for most of our lives. We are obliged to devote our efforts in great measure to providing the merely material conditions of our own existence and that of others. But if we keep the true end in view we shall surely gain it, both for ourselves and others—for Christian perfection is no mere private indulgence in 'draughts of intellectual day'. It is only by making God our end, which means God's will—the salvation of all men, that we shall gain him[2]. This may be done in a Carmelite's cell or by sweeping a crossing.

If we do not think of theology today as 'the science of the saints', it is because we have ceased to think of it as one supreme science which bears on the whole of Christian living. Theology has tightened in one sense since St. Augustine, but at the cost of parcelling out its riches. It has formed hard lumps which hang loosely together. What is called 'mystical theology' is no longer pervasive, and moral theology functions in a certain isolation from supernatural metaphysics. In speaking of Christian perfection, then, there is a danger of losing sight of our own first principles. When we say that what makes a man good is his willing effort, we must not be led into an unconscious anti-intellectualism. What makes a man good is (precisely) the gifts which God gives him; what makes him bad is his own rejection of them. We may say that man's goodness is in proportion to his acceptance, but it is the same to say that it is supremely important not to obstruct the effects of God's action upon us. This is the theme of the moralist, who naturally uses the language of co-operation rather than that of non-intervention. In the last analysis 'willing effort' refers to the exacting consequences for us of being God's instru-

[1] Or, to allay theological scruples, one might write 'our super-nature'.

[2] Contemplation thus involves asceticism, that is, at bottom, the proper performance of our several duties, whatever it costs us.

ments. Our part is to receive God's gift of himself. We are freed from sin only by grasping truth, by 'fixing' reality.

We state the same conclusion in another way by protesting against an unreal distinction between the 'moral' and the 'intellectual' virtues. We shall not find in St. Augustine a violent contrast between knowledge and love, between wisdom and charity. Sometimes we may appear to do so, but we have to remember that he had not 'the philosophy of his theology', as Professor Gilson once put it—that is, his conceptualizations may sometimes conceal his profoundest meaning. Behind them lies a vision of principles, a comprehensiveness which we today have lost in some measure. Let us conclude with P. Cayré's witness. St. Augustine's love, he tells us, 'bursts into theology because his love is wholly penetrated by intellectualism.'[1] Even when P. Cayré finds in St. Augustine a 'primacy of will', his loyalty to his master forces him to state it in such a way that it seems a misnomer. 'The lights of contemplation', he urges, 'do not of themselves constitute the perfection of this life.' But he has to add that in St. Augustine's doctrine 'it is by them that the soul finds God: the soul cannot truly repose in an object unless it is presented to it with a certain clarity'.[2] In fact, for St. Augustine, knowledge and love are intertwined. '*Curramus ergo ad hanc beatitudinem, intelligamus jubilationem, non sine intellectu fundamus. . . . Sonus enim cordis intellectus est.*'[3]

[1] *La Contemplation Augustinienne*, p. 242.
[2] pp. 291–292.
[3] *P.L.*, xxxvii, coll. 1271–1272. Sermon on the Psalm *Jubilate Deo.*

APPENDIX I

THOMISM AND SUPERNATURAL UNION

We turn now to the difficulty that 'supernatural union', even in the works of those theologians whose teaching seems most helpful to our argument, is treated with an embarrassing obscurity. Is this supernatural union a *knowledge*? Is it a knowledge of *God*? 'In our treatment of Christian perfection', writes P. Garrigou-Lagrange, 'we have considered the end to which it is essentially ordered, and from this point of view we have defined it as the beginning of eternal life in our souls or as eternal life begun in the obscurity of faith. For grace, of which this perfection is the unfolding on this earth, has been defined already as the seed of glory, and of the three theological virtues which we possess there is one which will endure for ever, charity.'[1] This passage marks a transition from what seemed an intellectualist position (for the glory of which grace is the seed is the vision of God—and that is an intellectual act, at least in Thomism) to the thesis that 'Christian perfection consists especially in charity'. The passage opens a section headed by these last words. That it is really a transition will soon be clear.

Christian perfection does consist, no doubt, in charity. The question is whether we are committed by that statement to an attack on 'intellectualism'. P. Garrigou-Lagrange appears to think so. Two pages later we find the following footnote: 'Perfection does not consist especially in contemplation, which is an intellectual act, as we shall see further on. Perfection consists in charity. However, the loving contemplation of God is here below the most efficacious means to attain the perfection of charity, and it is a means united to the end.' The last sentence goes far to take the sting from these remarks; but it is obvious that we have begun to face a crisis. We might hope to avert it by distinguishing the meanings of 'perfect'. Clearly we can speak of a 'perfect' man in the sense of one whose will is perfectly ordered, unfalteringly directed to his final end; this is in fact what we normally mean

[1] *Perfection Chrétienne*, p. 151. E.T. p. 129. (The translation is not always followed in the passages quoted.)

when we use the phrase. But we ought not to exclude from its meaning the actual attainment, so far as possible in this life, of the end itself. What causes confusion is that the end is not attainable except in a measure, and that Christian 'perfection' is in this sense a misleading standard. The goal of our supernatural morality here below is asymptotic; but it remains our present duty to aim at it. We must not fall into Kant's mistake of claiming 'good will' without any content as the true subject of ethics. Goodness must be considered in function of being, and 'it does not yet appear what we shall be'. But we may be called good if we do what we can, and even 'perfect', if it is clearly realized what we mean by it. For God, if we do what we can, will make us perfect.

P. Garrigou-Lagrange does not use these distinctions. He rejects what he calls an 'ultra-intellectualism', the view which would make a knowledge of God 'by description' of chief importance, mere theological 'learning'. But this is a thing of straw and hardly worth demolishing. If 'intellectualism' is understood in this narrow sense we must accept his attack upon it. But his failure to appreciate a higher sense is the whole trouble. When he deals with 'the objections of intellectuals' to his own doctrine, the full extent of the trouble is revealed to us. The objection is stated in the frankest manner, and the answer given is that our love of God is superior in this life to our knowledge of him. This is St. Thomas's doctrine and current coin. It points to the obvious truth that our *actual* knowledge of God may be impeded on earth for various reasons, but that our effort to grow in the knowledge and love of him is in our power and is, from the practical point of view, supremely important. But St. Thomas has comments on it which contain other suggestions, and his disciples have faithfully reproduced them. P. Garrigou-Lagrange, at this crucial point, offers as the philosophical explanation of the position a passage in which St. Thomas sums up these comments: 'The act of knowledge (*intellectus*) consists in this that the idea (*ratio*) of the thing known is in the knower; but the act of will is brought about by the tendency of the will to the thing itself as it really is (*ad ipsam rem prout in se est*). And so the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* lib. vi, text. 8) that good and evil, which are objects of the will, are in things, but truth and error, which are objects of knowledge, are in the mind.'[1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 166–167. E.T. p. 141—quoting *S. Th.* I, 82, 3.

We can desire, in other words, what we do not know. But how is this strange fact to be interpreted? Doesn't it mean that we are aware of ignorance and long to dissipate it? We know that our present knowledge is limited—we experience our own lack of fulfilment. Will follows knowledge. But the Thomist-Aristotelian psychology in its present application attacks this principle. Will is claiming a certain independence in the passage just quoted. This passage and its parallels have been extensively commented on by Thomists. But in spite of their ingenuity it is hard to see how they escape from an epistemological *impasse* and a lapse into 'voluntarism'. P. Garrigou-Lagrange's comment is typical: 'in order to know God we draw him to us in some sort, and in order to represent him to ourselves we impose on him the bounds of our limited ideas. On the other hand, when we love him, we raise ourselves towards him, such as he is in himself.'[1] This does seem to be what St. Thomas means in the passage quoted. The same article contains the converse doctrine that 'it is better to know inferior things than to love them', which P. Garrigou-Lagrange notes as 'a profound remark on which one cannot meditate too much'.[2] One wishes that Thomists would meditate upon it. Isn't this introducing a false cleavage between intellect and will? Mustn't we love what we know in so far as it *is*? And doesn't this explanation of love's primacy (true enough in the *practical* order) depend on a theory of knowledge which leads to agnosticism? In so far as we 'represent' God to ourselves we do 'impose bounds' on him, but our *knowledge* of God is not our representing of him. An attempt to explain how love can outstrip knowledge is worse than useless if it makes knowledge invalid.

We soon find that our suspicions are well grounded, that the will is beginning to play an illegitimate role in the account which we are following. Charity is now in the will as *opposed* to the intellect, and it is charity which unites us to God. 'Charity is superior to all knowledge in this life, even to contemplation.... For this quasi-experimental knowledge of God also imposes on us the limits of our ideas and it derives its savour from the very love which inspires it. It is charity that establishes in us a connaturality, a sympathy with divine things....'[3] We must reject

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 167. [2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 166.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 168–169. E.T., p. 143—referring to *S. Th.* II, II, 45, 2.

this divorcing of love from knowledge, and refuse to accept the narrow view of intellect which is implied by it. The union with God which is the aim of our lives is the soul's union; and the two faculties, will and intellect, are rooted there. Further, our supernatural knowledge of God, as described by P. Garrigou-Lagrange, does not seem to have *God* as its object, except in so far as it is 'inspired' by love. It begins to look very much as though intellect received its *specification* from will in this Thomist doctrine. Such a conclusion would be repudiated with the utmost vigour, and we must not rush into it without a fair testing.

Let us take as the test M. Maritain's account of it in his *Degrés du Savoir*. Here, if anywhere, we may expect to find answers to our questions. The second part of this monumental work is entitled 'the degrees of supra-rational knowledge'. Everything encourages us to think that we are beginning a treatise on supernatural epistemology which will vindicate the objectivity of 'mystical experience', and make it intelligible. M. Maritain begins by explaining that this knowledge is called 'quasi-experimental' because it is not, like the Beatific Vision, '*absolutely* immediate' (his italics); it is 'truly but imperfectly immediate'.[1] We may think this an odd way of distinguishing these degrees of knowledge, but we may accept gratefully the recognition (however hesitant it seems) of a genuine immediacy in each of them. Some pages follow in which the 'knowledge of faith' is described on the regular 'high Thomist' lines which we have previously considered; faith is the 'substitute' (*suppléance*) of the Beatific Vision and knows the same supreme object 'without seeing it' (*sans le voir*, in capitals), producing though in obscurity an infallible adhesion to what the First Truth has revealed of its own self.'[2] 'Infused wisdom', however, does 'consist in the knowledge of the essentially supernatural object of faith and of theology, the Deity as such, in a mode which is itself supra-human and supernatural. . . . Faith alone is not sufficient for this; it must be perfected in its mode of operation by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. . . .'[3]

Let us pause to take stock of the position. So far M. Maritain seems to be finding for us what we want, although the method of finding it is unsatisfactory. We should have expected this supernatural knowledge to be the development of the knowledge of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 489. E.T. p. 306.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 494. E.T. p. 308.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 502. E.T. p. 313.

faith, but any straightforward theory on these lines has been ruled out by the Thomist insistence on faith's lack of all evidence. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost are introduced to fill the gap. Without discarding the theology of the Gifts we may note that modern scholars have called attention to the absence of this modern thesis in the Patristic writings. And we may ask whether the Gifts provide a principle of explanation which differs radically from that which faith itself would seem to offer. With this important proviso, M. Maritain's account, so far, is promising. In fact, if this were the sum of it, we could be satisfied. Supernatural knowledge is a reality, and (we have seen) it is recognized more and more widely as *organic* in Christianity. 'Mystic experience', in M. Maritain's words, 'appears as the normal term *de jure* of the life of grace, and may even be called the summit to which all human life is tending.'[1] (We may expect, then, to find it immanent in this life of grace in some small measure even in its beginning.) So far we have no hint of a primacy of the will. And we may note another promising passage in which M. Maritain speaks of a' realm of being freed from the limits of the sensible . . . our natural ordination to the being of things on the same (sensible) level as our own is a sort of "jumping-off place" (*amorce*) which compels us to rise to a higher level . . . we must say with Aristotle that human nature, by reason of what is principal in it, the νοῦς, claims to make contact with what is higher than man'.[2] The Aristotelian idea of 'mind', let us interpret, itself implies the supersession at this higher level of the normal Aristotelian psychology.

But the old trouble soon begins again. When we examine the account of the life of grace which M. Maritain gives us, we find once more the doctrine of knowledge by 'connaturality', knowledge, that is, which stands in so peculiar a relation to charity that we wonder whether it can be knowledge at all. 'Grace confers on us supernaturally a radical power of seizing Pure Act as object, a new root of spiritual activity having as its proper and specifying object the divine essence itself . . . no doubt it will flower into vision only at its final term, but it does flower on earth in charity, which is *the same* (his italics) on earth as in heaven, although in an imperfect form, for it requires of its nature (*de soi*) to flow from

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 512. E.T. p. 319.

[2] '*Demande á passer á ce qui est audessus de l'homme*', *op. cit.*, p. 492. E.T. p. 307.

vision and proceeds here below only from faith as a substitute for vision.'[1] So far we might interpret charity as the dynamic aspect of that adherence to God in which living faith consists, an adherence in which we have claimed to find an intellectual union. But a passage follows which shows that the Thomist view is far more complex. 'With charity and for charity, which is its inseparable property, this new nature (grace) develops in us a whole organism of supernatural energies, theological virtues of faith and hope, gifts of the Holy Ghost, infused moral virtues, which fix our conversation in heaven.'

Everything, in M. Maritain's account, is centred in charity, not as something following from faith (as we have previously been told) but as something controlling it. What we have to examine is the exact nature of this control of faith by charity, which is at the moment only vaguely disquieting. To this end we must see in more detail what M. Maritain has to say about 'knowledge by connaturality'. Our supernatural knowledge of God, he tells us, is not a knowledge by means of concepts (a useful admission) and must therefore be explained by that which 'connaturalizes' us with God—grace which is made operative by charity; charity is the property of grace and attains God as really present in us.[2] Grace is thus a potency for charity in which true union consists. M. Maritain gives the stock Thomist example of the peculiar form of knowledge which he is proposing to us: the chaste man knows what is chaste because the virtue of chastity is 'inviscerated' in him, and his judgement is right by 'instinct'. Rousselot has offered an explanation of St. Thomas's meaning. Such a knowledge by 'connaturality', he pointed out, need not involve any abandonment of intellectualism; it refers to our observation of our own natural tendencies when they have become habituated to act in the right way; if we find such tendencies gravitating (as it were, automatically) to a certain conclusion, then we prove right in following them—we need not think it out each time. Thus it is a sort of immediate inference—it is all based on thought and knowledge in the last analysis.[3] But M. Maritain does not refer to Rousselot.[4]

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 504–505. E.T. pp. 314–315.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 515–516. E.T. p. 321.
[3] *Intellectualisme de S. Thomas*, pp. 70–71.
[4] Rousselot is not a Thomist of the 'strict observance'.

According to M. Maritain, although faith is the 'radical principle' of mystical experience, *fides illustrata donis*, the intervention must be postulated not only of the 'gift of wisdom' but also of charity as the 'formal means'. The doctrine of the 'formal means' is the theological source of the superiority of will over intellect so often alleged by spiritual writers. The *loci classici* for this are certain passages in John of St. Thomas and Joseph of the Holy Spirit, and we shall have the essence of the matter before us if we set out the passage from the former to which M. Maritain appeals at this point:[1] 'Faith in its obscurity attains to God while remaining in some sort at a distance, in so far as faith is of what is not seen. But charity attains to God in himself, immediately, uniting itself to what is hidden in faith. And so, although faith rules love and union with God, in so far as it proposes the object, yet, in virtue of this union by which love adheres immediately to God, the intelligence is raised by a certain affective experience to judge divine things in a fashion higher than that which the obscurity of faith carries with it, because it penetrates and knows that there is more hidden in the things of faith (*plus de caché*, in italics) than faith itself manifests, finding there more to love and more to taste by loving; and by this something *more* which love shows to be hidden there, it judges in a higher way of divine things, under a special instinct of the Holy Spirit.'[2] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that will, the faculty of love, is replacing intellect here as the principle of specification. It would be less alarming if the 'gift of wisdom' performed this function, even though its connexion with faith would still be hard to find. We might then say that charity is the condition for this development of our intellectual powers. But charity, in M. Maritain's account, seems to be something much more than this.

To conclude the matter we must examine M. Maritain's note.[3] 'Love', he tells us (referring jointly to P. Garrigou-Lagrange and P. Gardeil), 'puts on an objective condition not as the object known, but as the means of knowledge or *objectum quo*.' He explains that what he is referring to as the *objectum quo* is not charity or wisdom taken as *habitus* but '*amour actuel infus*, in which and by which under the illumination of the Holy Spirit . . . there takes

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 518. E.T. p. 323.
[2] John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.* I–II, q. 68–70, disp. 18, a. 4, n. 14.
[3] *Loc. cit.*

place an experienced contact between God and the soul'. (He emphasizes that these touches of love are *effects* of God, and that the knowledge of them is thus, as we have been already told, a true but imperfectly immediate knowledge of him—but let us leave aside for the moment this part of the problem.) The illumination of the Holy Spirit, he goes on, gives these touches of connaturality 'a role comparable with that of the formal concept, which is possible because this is not a clear knowledge but experimental knowledge, obscure and negative, which unites the soul to God as hidden, *quasi ignoto*'. Can we accept that distinction? Does it explain anything in this mysterious process? And (the main point) must we not draw the conclusion that in this doctrine the point of transition from the blindness of faith to the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the specifying principle of this fresh knowledge, is *amour actuel infus*? Yet *nihil volitum nisi praecognitum.*

At this point Thomists seem to exchange one horn of the dilemma for another in a bewildering way. There have been many attempts to show that 'knowledge by connaturality', in such accounts as that which we have considered, does not make will a 'specifying' principle; but they either deny in effect that there is knowledge at all, or else assume that knowledge, though present, is not the means of union, which is to say the same thing in another way. If the 'touch' to the will is not also a 'touch' to the intellect, it is not intelligible—it cannot be known; if the intellect has not been itself 'informed' by something, it cannot explore it. The Holy Spirit does not, it seems, inform it, according to Thomists; it enlightens it to perceive a previous 'informing', the informing of will which God has already produced. It is *this* 'informing', then, which is the heart of the matter; the essence of supernatural union is thus in the will, and attempts to 'intellectualize' it at later stages lead to the negative language of M. Maritain's conclusion. Intellect has been superseded; and it is of no service to introduce a 'negative intellect'. P. Garrigou-Lagrange illustrates the other side of the hedging process. He lays down St. Thomas's general principle that 'will supposes intelligence and is directed by it',[1] but two pages on, when he tells us that it is better to love God than to know him, he adds 'although love always supposes a *certain* knowledge [my italics] and is directed by it'. This is the change-over to the thesis that the will, at a certain point, is no longer

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 165. E.T. p. 140—referring to *S. Th.*, I, 82, 3.

directed but takes over direction—it leads the intellect. We must first know that God is our last end (so the argument runs); but then our *wills* can be acted on by him—but now *not* directed by a correlative increase in knowledge.

M. Maritain has claimed also the support of P. Gardeil, and it will be useful to see how far their agreement extends. We find in P. Gardeil's *Structure de l'Ame*[1] the same doctrine of will's pre-eminence and the same reference to John of St. Thomas, and it is clear that will has here not only a practical primacy as the mover of intellect (that is common sense), but also at the crucial point of the analysis an *ontological* one. P. Gardeil describes John of St. Thomas's teaching as follows: 'Faith', he says, 'is the rule of love and of the union with God which is its consequence, because it is faith that proposes their object to them, and, if it were not so proposed, neither love nor union would be possible. Yet, under the empire of this union, in the midst of which God is immediately touched and united to the will, the intelligence is subjected to an affective experience and led to judge of divine things in a way which takes it further than faith's obscurity permits. For it penetrates and knows that there is hidden in the things of faith more than faith manifests. And how does it know this? It knows it because the soul loves more.' This is all the more significant because P. Gardeil has insisted so strongly on the *mens* as the seat of both intellect and will, and has avoided so carefully a factitious opposition between them. Can we wonder, faced in such a context by this 'leading' of the intellect by the will, that supernatural psychology in the more popular versions involves a frank reversal of roles for these faculties? It is clear that we need to restate this doctrine in terms of intellect, to attach the 'gift of wisdom' to faith's development, a development which would then remain homogeneous throughout all its stages. Nor will this depress charity; it is not only a condition *sine qua non*, but also the fullness of faith and its flower.

In P. Gardeil's work the Thomist doctrine of will is bound up with the other Thomist difficulties—with 'negative knowledge' and the hesitancy to admit that God is a genuine object.[2] But we

[1] Vol. II, pp. 260–261.

[2] Along with the works of PP. Garrigou-Lagrange and Gardeil, P. Joret's *Contemplation Mystique* (Desclée, 1923) ranks generally as the other standard source. Here the insistence on 'negative knowledge' and on the primacy of will in the sense which we have alleged is unmistakable.

shall see that in the long run he does reach certain conclusions of a more promising nature which distinguish him from the other members of his school. The arguments by which he reaches these conclusions are not, from our point of view, always acceptable; it is the conclusions themselves which provide us with his authoritative support.[1] But it will be necessary first to mention the arguments. The main thesis of *Structure de l'Ame* is that we find in the directness of our own self-knowledge the model and indeed the explanation of the directness of supernatural knowledge. P. Gardeil requires this analogy as an explanation, because he starts with a view of natural knowledge according to which it is wholly indirect; he puts what has seemed to us[2] a Thomist paradox in the baldest way: 'intellectual knowledge of objects external to the soul can take place only by an intermediary, an idea or concept, representing within the subject what exists outside it . . . the object, being itself material, must be abstracted from its matter so as to be represented to the intelligence. The idea is then within as the substitute or spiritual "vicar" of the object. But the essence of the soul is presented to the intelligent soul by itself. . . . We must not imagine between God and the soul in grace any objective intermediaries, either infused ideas or effects, in order to guarantee their actual meeting, by a sort of obscure vision in the one case or an inference in the other.'[3] In the last sentence the writer has reached ground where we may tread in greater comfort. The following words are even more comforting: '*Immediate* [his italics] union between God and the soul has been established in its depths ever since the infusion of grace, and by this infusion and the continuous vivifying of the sanctified soul by God, the soul has been empowered to experience him . . . and, in the case of an adult, it has been able to experience him straightway.' The immediacy of this experience is a main theme of the concluding section of the book from which these words are taken.

M. Maritain has criticized P. Gardeil in an appendix to *Degrés du Savoir*.[4] The criticism bears for the most part on what are, for

[1] P. Gardeil's work has been recently criticized by P. Chambat (*Présence et Union*, Abbaye de S. Wandrille) as a misinterpretation of St. Thomas. We are not concerned here with the historical question.

[2] *v.* Part I, ch. 2.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 92, 104 and 254.

[4] pp. 854 f. (omitted in the English translation).

our purposes, irrelevant matters, questions of language and emphasis. But it contains one passage which will enable us to bring to a point the comparison, so far largely implicit, between these writers. 'If in a general way it is not the business of love itself to effect the *unio realis,* yet the love of charity presupposes the real union granted by sanctifying grace . . . it is precisely the property of the gift of wisdom to use the *unio affectiva* proper to such a love .. .'[1] Set against this, the following passage from the Preface to *Structure de l'Ame* will prove illuminating: 'In the soul of the just there are two realities. There is God substantially present as he is in the depths of all things . . . but there is also, and this is found only in the soul of the just, that radical power to know God as he is in himself which we call sanctifying grace. In the "centre" (*fond*), in the essence of the justified soul, God, then, already offers himself obscurely as the predestined object of knowledge and love.

This immediate but purely "habitual" presence of the divine object to the justified soul is actualized in mystical contemplation.'[2] . . . P. Gardeil provides us elsewhere with all the puzzles of the Thomist account; he can be, as we have seen, as voluntarist as anyone on occasion, and M. Maritain, in the passage last quoted from him, has as his main business to criticize him for seeming to evacuate faith altogether in the interests of stressing the Thomist doctrine of the 'gift of wisdom'.[3] Yet the passage from the Preface shows that his eventual orientation is satisfactory. 'Real union' does not take place, as M. Maritain seems to imply, in the will in the first place, but in the 'centre' of the intellective soul. The union of grace is itself the *power* to know (and so to love) God, and to know him and love him as an obscure but direct object. Grace is *for* faith, we may therefore say, which flowers in charity.

[1] p. 865. This *unio affectiva* results from the 'physical' presence of grace; there is no hint of an intellectual correlate to explain it. Hence, again, an illegitimate primacy of love.

[2] *Op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. xxiii. '*Pouvoir radicale de saisie intellectuelle de Dieu*' are P. Gardeil's words in the second sentence.

[3] We are now at a point at which the difficulty of distinguishing the gifts from the infused theological virtues may be more clearly recognized. The only argument from reason offered to us by St. Thomas (*S.Th.,* I, II, 68, 2), followed by all his school, is that the infused virtues are not of themselves sufficient to enable us for the requisite supernatural acts. But this is precisely what had to be proved. The Church has not pronounced upon the matter in any definite way, and we may leave it at that.

If P. Gardeil has appeared more definite than M. Maritain in maintaining the 'immediacy' of this knowledge of God and in assigning its object, he will be found to contrast still more markedly in this respect with P. Garrigou-Lagrange. The latter raises the question[1] of an 'immediate perception of God such as to make us know him as he is' only to conclude that 'everything leads us to think that it is impossible' in this life. Partly this is because 'as he is' (*sicuti est*), in P. Garrigou-Lagrange's vocabulary, is a technical expression used only with reference to the Beatific Vision. But there are other reasons for the denial of this 'immediate perception'. One is that P. Garrigou-Lagrange is combating a view that God could be thus made known by created 'species'—a view which is of no interest here. Another, more important, is his assumption that the object of supernatural knowledge, since it is not the vision of God in glory, is not in any *positive* sense a knowledge of God himself but only of his 'effects' upon the soul by way of 'ardent sentiments' of various kinds.[2] We have seen that P. Gardeil, writing a few years later, although he may seem at first to be in agreement with P. Garrigou-Lagrange's theory of a negative intuition of God, in fact goes further. It does not seem to be much appreciated that a certain criticism of P. Garrigou-Lagrange's work is thus constituted. The final emphasis in *Structure de l'Ame* is on the kinship between our supernatural knowledge of God and the heavenly vision.[3] It is, at its fullest, the supreme disposition for this vision, *ultima dispositio ad formam*, a genuine 'anticipation'.[4]

There are only two books in English, to my knowledge, which contain any detailed treatment of P. Gardeil's conclusions such as to require a mention of them here. The more recent of the two is Mr. Mascall's *He Who Is*. It contains a most useful summary which keeps close to the actual words of P. Gardeil, and it serves to remind us that his doctrine of 'immediate experience' is sometimes

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 331–337; E.T. pp. 266–271.

[2] Surprisingly, he claims to interpret the 'mystics' themselves in this sense, relying (apparently) on Saudreau's *État Mystique*.

[3] It is unfortunate that *Structure de l'Ame* is so little used in this country. A shortened form of it in English would be of the greatest service (as it stands it is heavily schematic and, the first volume especially, very slow-moving). The concluding section, the last testament of a great theologian, written with a consciousness of finality, is charged with a restrained enthusiasm which is profoundly impressive.

[4] p. 264.

stated in terms which suggest that it has no *positive* object, in fact that it is not genuine knowledge. 'No doubt the soul will then contemplate nothing, but if it truly shares in the divine wisdom it will do better than contemplate; in so far as it has become one spirit with God, it will feel, touch, and experience immediately the substantial presence of God within itself.'[1] Mr. Mascall takes this as a denial of intellectual activity. But the soul cannot do better than know God and love him. It seems preferable to interpret P. Gardeil, in accordance with his fundamental principles, as protesting against all *abstractive* knowledge and not against knowledge itself. It would be in this sense that the soul is joined to God, as he says in the same passage, *tamquam ignoto et inaccessibili*. God is known in that 'general' way of which the mystics speak, and about which they are forced to use only negative language in order to safeguard the Object's utter transcendence. Mr. Mascall, however, sums up the position thus in an earlier chapter: 'Catholic theology has been on the whole very reluctant to admit that, even in authentic religious experience, there is anything that could validly be described as a direct apprehension or an immediate knowledge of God. The only exception that it would make would be in the rare case of mystical union, properly so called, and then it would say that the soul was apprehended by God, that it was seized upon by him rather than that he was apprehended by it.'[2]

Mr. Mascall is not unjustified here. The word 'experience' in our present matter is used by Thomists in a way which excludes from it any reference to intellectual activity; at the same time there is a tendency to speak of a union with God which *sounds* pantheistic. Thus Mr. Mascall is led to say that in mystical experience 'the human soul is devoid of all activity whatever, even of the least active co-operation'.[3] What the mystics themselves are trying to indicate when they use Mr. Mascall's language is surely that fullness of knowledge and love which is pure receptivity and at the same time spiritual *growth* at its greatest intensity. If we treat the 'experience' as real knowledge, not only is its objective value respected, but we can find it as the crown of a consistent spiritual development. It ceases to be an 'abnormal' phenomenon of which we can give no intelligible account. To

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 260, quoted in *He Who Is*, p. 147.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 21. [3] p. 147.

make such a thesis articulate would require a volume—we can give only an illustration of it by a brief reference to the 'Dark Nights' which the process entails. Mr. Mascall's account of this is as follows: 'God so exceeds the capacity of the human mind that the more the soul is brought face to face with God, the less it is able to distinguish his features'[1] (the spiritual marriage then supervenes as something wholly anomalous). We should say rather that the knowledge of faith, if it is to reach full development, must raise the soul above 'concepts' and free it from all inordinate worldly attachments. The essential law is therefore the growth of knowledge, and the 'Dark Nights' must be understood in function of it.[2]

The second of the two books which claim our attention is Dom Anselm Stolz's *Theologie der Mystik*, which has been mentioned already in another connexion. This also contains a most valuable summary of P. Gardeil's thesis, but it lays such an emphasis on the 'ontological' as opposed to the psychological approach that it seems to deny the essential 'ordering' of grace (*qua* potency) to its actual development in our experience of God. This leads to an unintelligible description of the mystical life as a 'trans-psychological experience'.[3] It is interesting but depressing to see that Dom Stolz finds a parallel to this in the act of faith. It is depressing, because we had found in his lectures on faith a certain support for our own positions; while this parallel means that the knowledge of faith is merely rational in its psychological mode, though supernatural in its hidden essence. (That is the common view, which we have ventured to question.) The parallel is interesting because it supposes a movement of thought which is the exact reverse of that which we followed. It is taken for granted that faith carries with it no supernatural knowledge; why, then, should not faith's development be equally baffling? Faith is a paradox, anyway; so why not another? We have argued rather that supernatural knowledge is a clear fact, at least in the mystics, and it follows from theological principles that it is *faith's* development. Can we not find it, then, in the act of faith and so save faith from the charge of paradox? The first movement of thought accepts a

[1] p. 221.

[2] They are often described as 'withdrawals' on the part of God; it is less misleading to call them his pressure upon us.

[3] p. 177 in the Eng. trans. *The Doctrine of Spiritual Perfection* (Herder).

'common opinion' on faith and uses it for a theory of 'mystic experience'[1]—the second accepts the fact of this experience and uses it against the common opinion.

[1] Dom Stolz has a reason for this substitution of 'trans-psychological' for actua experience—it eases the problem of Christian perfection by placing holiness in what we may call a capacity for knowledge rather than in knowledge itself. This we have discussed already. It is not that Dom Stolz denies actual 'mystic experience'—but the actuality is opposed to its secret workings in such a way as to blur its 'normal' character.

APPENDIX II

A RECENT BOOK ON THE ACT OF FAITH

The previous chapters had been already drafted when P. Roger Aubert's massive volume *Le Problème de l'Acte de Foi*[1] made its appearance. The author deals with the teaching of Scripture and of the Fathers on the subject and with that of St. Thomas and of the Council of Trent; he goes on to deal with the propositions condemned by Innocent XI and devotes nearly a hundred pages to the Council of the Vatican. But all this is less than a third of the book. It runs to over eight hundred pages, and about one half of the whole is devoted to a study of the various theories which have been put forward from the end of the nineteenth century to the present time. The book ends with an essay embodying the author's own views. They have been described by P. E. Dhanis, S.J., in an article-review[2] as 'highly suggestive, but drawn with lines which might have been sometimes clearer and, though undoubtedly original, yet not wholly exempt from eclecticism'. This seems a just verdict. But P. Dhanis does not intend to suggest that the book is not of the greatest importance. It is one of those, he says, which mark 'a considerable advance in theological science'.

It is most gratifying to see that P. Aubert finds just those difficulties in the current teaching of theologians which this book has ventured to suggest, and that he proposes a theory which goes a long way towards that which has just been proposed to the reader. It seems possible to show in a short Appendix that, if his own views are supported by the teaching of the Church and the theological tradition (as he has so convincingly demonstrated), those of this book may be safely accepted as resting upon the same basis —that is, if they should be accepted as a further precision, a further development along the same lines, which is both legitimate and necessary.

It will be remembered that the difficulty about Billot's theory seemed to be that it gave no justification for *certitude*—for the sovereign certainty which faith demands in the subject. God's authority is a sure ground of certitude, but how do *we* find God's

[1] Louvain, 1945. [2] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Jan. 1946.

authority as the motive of faith? P. Aubert makes the same point as follows (he points out that the theory in question should be attributed rather to Pesch than to Billot): 'When Suarez or de Lugo raised the problem of the *analysis fidei* by saying that the foundation must be as solid as the building, they were concerned with the question of subjective certitude, and Pesch and his successors, far from finding a solution, only fight shy of a most real problem by moving over to the objective order' (pp. 238–9). He adds in a footnote that the problem is a modern one which the thirteenth-century theologians did not directly envisage. The importance of this remark in our present context should need no underlining.

P. Aubert's agreement is equally marked in regard to Rousselot's theory of the 'eyes of faith' which read the true meaning of the rational 'motives of credibility'. 'According to him', P. Aubert writes, 'we believe *because the reason perceives the arguments* which prove that God has spoken; for the eyes of faith are only the reason made more penetrating *to see the arguments*. Thus, the effective cause of the act of faith remains the perception of the motives of credibility by the reason; the will and grace intervene only to make possible the perception of these motives. Doesn't it give these too much honour and give to the speculative judgement of credibility, even though enclosed within the act of faith, an importance which the ancient and medieval traditions had not granted it?' (p. 510). This passage indicates just that difficulty about Rousselot's theory (and Fr. D'Arcy's) which we have stressed above. It will be obvious from it that P. Aubert regards the rational arguments as a mere *removens prohibens* in relation to faith, and that he is concerned above all to safeguard faith's supernatural character. This is all eminently satisfactory. It might seem, indeed, that he excludes an effect of grace on the *intellect*, but this question must be left for later treatment.

Before we pass from his discussion of Rousselot's theory, it is worth noting that he praises him for treating the problem as one which requires for its solution a general epistemology. 'If the theologians so often find themselves at a dead end, isn't this because they put a poor philosophy at the service of their enquiries?' (p. 455). The solution of this problem, he maintains in various places, is one to which not only the theologians but also the philosophers and the psychologists must contribute; they may do

so, he adds later, (p. 630) even when they possess no *grade canonique*. He warns the professional theologians against thinking that only they have a right to speak.

P. Aubert puts the problem as follows at one point: 'According to the most classical theology, the *motive* of *faith*, that is, the authority of God, can move us to assent only when we are convinced of this authority, and this evidence which is a prerequisite cannot have a "scientific" character' (pp. 363–4). Our theology, he holds, is coming back to a recognition that it is the 'inner voice' which is the all-important factor of solution. 'Scheeben was one of the great labourers in this work of replacing in its position of honour the "mystical" aspect of faith; for him the light of faith is a grace by which God makes himself known to the soul without intermediary, as being himself who speaks. This doctrine seemed sufficiently grounded in the whole Catholic tradition for so prudent a writer as P. Lebreton to write on the very eve of the Encyclical *Pascendi*: "the Spirit of Christ, which lives and speaks in the Church, lives also in each of the faithful, and his discreet and profound voice echoes the official teaching of the Church. If you ask one of these truly Christian souls what is the most powerful motive of their faith, they will perhaps have some difficulty about self-analysis. But on reflexion they will recognize that their most pressing reason for believing is that they feel themselves impelled by God".' (*Études*, 1908, t. cxviii, p. 735.) In many other passages P. Aubert urges that we are now in a position to draw more positive lessons from the Modernist crisis. We must accept the appeal to a supernatural perception (p. 720), while avoiding the pitfalls of 'immanentism' and preserving the truth that we accept God's supernatural revelation on his authority.

It has been noted earlier that many suggestions have been made which converge towards the solution put forward in these chapters. The passage from Scheeben just quoted is one of many illustrations of this which are found in P. Aubert's book. Karl Adam, for example, he tells us, has concluded that 'the majority of Catholic theologians, St. Thomas, the most representative among them, Capreolus, his best commentator, Banez, the leader of the Thomist school, Molina, his great adversary, and many more, are in agreement that divine faith rests in the last analysis upon an interior and mystical illumination . . .' (p. 523). P. Aubert finds that Karl Adam minimizes the role of intelligence in

favour of 'sentiment' (surely a just criticism),[1] but considers that his theory of an intuition is 'generally defensible, and constitutes a very attractive though still too vague an attempt at a solution of a problem which the theologians generally brush aside in a far too light-hearted manner' (p. 153).

The passage last quoted is highly significant when taken in conjunction with a note on p. 487; in this P. Aubert praises P. Huby for pointing out that St. Thomas always relates the act of faith not to the *ratio* but to the *intellectus* 'that form of non-discursive knowledge which modern scholastics so easily neglect and which has yet such a great importance in the Thomist system'. This suggests that P. Aubert would be in sympathy with the theory of a supernatural and *intellectual* intuition proposed by this book. But it must be confessed that he normally uses the word 'intellectualist' to refer to those who exaggerate the role of the natural motives of credibility. If we now turn to P. Aubert's own view, we may find that this use of language points to a certain weakness or lack of completion in it. P. Dhanis in his review reaches this conclusion. He asks whether P. Aubert's theory of the formal motive of faith is compatible with the sovereign certitude which faith must possess. He adds that this question of certitude is 'not one of those which the author has treated *ex professo*' and that 'perhaps he is keeping his explanations in reserve . . .' But it would be hard on P. Aubert to take this as meaning that he has not made a serious enquiry into the central problem.

What, then, are his conclusions? They are introduced by the following passage: 'The Church', he writes, 'has never forbidden us to think that the very motive of faith, the authority of divine revelation, may be the object of a certain immediate supernatural perception; and it has never excluded the possibility that the faithful may have a confused experience of the truth of certain dogmas, even as a normal thing. Quite on the contrary, there are, in the Christian tradition, a series of elements which emphasize the importance of this more experimental aspect of religious knowledge' (p. 703). He then touches on the question whether there is a real difference between the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and points out that it is only in modern theology that any marked difference is found. (All this is in complete harmony with our own conclusions.) And he proposes, finally, that

[1] Adam is also open to the criticism passed on Rousselot.

God 'inspires in the believer, by a supernatural motion exercised upon his will, a strong desire to see him . . . and love him . . . Faith appears to him on various grounds as the means to prepare for and to realize already in an inchoative way this union with God'. There is 'an imperious inclination which impels him to give his adhesion to God's word'. He then appeals to a 'certain supernatural intuition of the fact of revelation' (pp. 729–30), and thus seems to reach a fundamentally satisfactory conclusion in agreement with several theologians whom he has quoted earlier, notably P. Malevez (p. 607 and foll.) and his own reviewer P. Dhanis (p. 613). One sentence quoted from the latter must be added here: 'According to the Thomist tradition, the formal motive of faith is the uncreated Word, which mysteriously guarantees itself at the same time that it guarantees its content.'[1]

Why, then, does P. Dhanis find a weakness in P. Aubert's theory? Because P. Aubert adds at this point that the acceptance of the supernatural so far described must carry with it the recognition of 'signs', above all of the Church as an incarnation of Revelation. This does not mean merely that God is made known to us as guaranteeing his Church—which would seem the true answer to the whole problem. It seems to mark a retreat, as P. Dhanis observes, to the position of Rousselot which P. Aubert himself had so effectively criticized. For P. Aubert thinks that the 'intuition' will not have a 'precise object' unless 'the divine power is directly apprehended shining through the Church's members and institutions' (pp. 730–31). This does suggest that he is covertly introducing the 'motives of credibility' into the motive of faith itself in spite of his previous repudiation of that solution. So P. Dhanis thinks, and he therefore comments: 'It is clear that the intrinsic certitude of an assent cannot be founded on any motive other than its formal motive.' And the formal motive is simply the voice of *God*. Our certainty must be rooted in him—and *then*[2] bear on his Church. When we are considering the 'motives of credibility' we may say that the Church leads us to God. When we are speaking of the act of faith, we must say that he leads us to her.

This brings us to the crucial point of the whole discussion. The weakness which P. Dhanis detects in P. Aubert's theory arises

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1939, pp. 1101–1102.

[2] Only a *logical* posterity is meant.

from P. Aubert's dissatisfaction with the object of faith's formal motive when it is described as acceptance of God's supernatural summons *without* the support of the 'signs'. It is reasonable, then, to suggest that his dissatisfaction may be due to the way in which he conceives of this acceptance. We have seen that he describes the act of faith as resulting from an operation of grace on the soul's *affective powers*. Thus he feels the need to add (p. 773) that we must beware of illusions in such conditions; this 'attraction' needs to be 'verified' (p. 774). The intellect is 'drawn' by God, he writes in his conclusion, because it is made to 'see in the act of faith the necessary condition for reaching the supreme blessedness to which man aspires' (p. 785). Again, the need for 'verification' is evident; the intellect's object is nebulous. Hence arises the syncretism which P. Dhanis discovers in P. Aubert's theory, the tendency to fall back on the rational motives to buttress the feebleness of the grounds for certainty. But if we can claim an object for the *intellect* in the act of faith, P. Aubert's hesitations and the objections to which they give rise can all be avoided.

This proposal does not in any way run counter to P. Aubert's insistence that the act of faith is the act of the whole person. It is just because it is the act of the whole person that the proper function of the intellect must appear in it no less than the proper functions of the other powers. Enough has been said previously about the word 'intellect' and its claim to stand for man's power of union with God. All other powers minister to this, and thus the more fully 'intellectual' the act, the more fully human it is. It seems that P. Aubert is unwilling to grant that the act of faith contains a genuine 'intellection', a presentation by God of himself to the soul as its object, because he equates 'intellection' for the most part with 'reasoning'. He objects to Rousselot's view of the rational motives as 'too intellectualist' (p. 510). Yet we have seen that he has laid emphasis at the same time on the distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*, which was in fact so dear to Rousselot. There is one passage—but only one—in which he follows up this clue: 'It is certain that the source of faith is found in that profound region of our spiritual life which St. Thomas calls *intellectus*, far more than in the *ratio*, the domain of abstract ideas and discursive reasonings' (p. 745). Why then, should we not find the source of certainty in the intellective intuition of God the Revealer? To call the intuition 'affective' as opposed to 'intellective'

seems to cause unnecessary obscurity. Doesn't God speak to the *soul*, to the mind and the heart together?[1]

P. Aubert would perhaps object that this view will not square with the facts of experience. It does not seem worth while to repeat what has been said already in answer to this except to insist that a *non-intellective* certainty cannot be proposed as the means of solution. That God's supernatural operations affect both will and intellect is a view which has plenty of traditional backing; P. Aubert himself has occasion to quote St. Francis of Sales as saying that the act of faith takes place in the 'fine point of the soul'. The 'fine point' is conceived of as being the *root* of both faculties. The orthodoxy of this view of an intellectual intuition of God has also been discussed already at length. The materials gathered together in P. Aubert's book reinforce the conclusion that, if an intuition of God be granted at all (as it undoubtedly is), the unwillingness to call it 'intellectual' is of no dogmatic significance, and that it is based sometimes on certain conventions of language which we may not feel obliged to accept. It does not much matter (although one may think it unfortunate) that the soul's fundamental experience should be described as 'affective' rather than 'intellective'. P. Aubert has granted that philosophical questions are at the base of our problem. He has also shown how recent writers have found it more and more difficult to distinguish will from intellect at the profounder levels. Blondel, for example, is generally thought to be 'voluntarist', but it would be as true to call him 'intellectualist'. Bergson's insistence that 'intuition' is capable of clarity in various degrees is another pointer in the right direction.

It may be wise to add at this point that there is no question of denying the value of P. Aubert's remarks about 'affective' *conditions*. The 'desire of God' is indeed a most vital factor. But what brings this desire to birth? The relevance of moral dispositions is clear enough, and Newman's psychological enquiries are of the utmost importance—but rather for the *praeambula fidei* than for our own question.[2]

In the light of all this we may now turn to P. Aubert's treatment

[1] Cf. P. Aubert's quotation from M. Mouroux (p. 619).

[2] P. Aubert is perhaps a little lenient to the German theologians who tend to a slightly dangerous 'community-mysticism'. But they too—and the modern Gestalt psychologists—have much to tell us which is most useful in practice.

of certain writers previously discussed but not yet mentioned in the present connexion. He is in sympathy with the modern Dominican school in respect of its stress on the 'mystical' element in the act of faith, but he finds an incompleteness in its doctrine for reasons which are broadly the same as those already suggested in this book. He quotes P. Schwalm's description of the act of faith as 'not a vision of God, but a contact with his presence, obscure no doubt, but most certainly experienced, thus a knowledge like that which comes from the hearing, *auditus interior*, as St. Thomas says . . .' but he sees in P. Schwalm's violent attacks on Blondel a sign that modern Thomists do not accept the full meaning of St. Thomas's formulas. Are they not content to repeat them, he asks, 'in the context of a modern spirit which is quite different and which was developed chiefly by Jesuit theologians of the sixteenth century?' (p. 259). In other words, don't even they overstress the 'rational' and understress the 'mystical' elements? This is perhaps at the root of P. Aubert's dissatisfaction with the theory of P. Garrigou-Lagrange. He considers that P. Garrigou-Lagrange has not explained his distinction between natural and supernatural faith by his correlative distinction between the authority of God as the author of nature and the authority of God as the author of the order of grace, quoting with approval the remark of P. Philippe de la Trinité that 'there is only *one* divine authority, always of infinite value' (p. 450). Isn't the real trouble that P. Garrigou-Lagrange has not satisfactorily distinguished the two different *ways* of knowing God, the natural and the supernatural, that he has not discovered in the act of faith a form of genuine *knowledge* in the supernatural order such as to give us *certainty*?

The same moral may be drawn from P. Aubert's criticism of Dom Stolz. Dom Stolz, as we have seen, concludes to a supernatural perception of the First Truth, and P. Aubert makes exactly that criticism which was offered in our own discussion—'Unfortunately,' he writes, 'Stolz tells us nothing of the way in which this grasp occurs' (p. 642). He adds that Dom Stolz appeals to knowledge by 'connaturality'; here it must be remarked that P. Aubert has commented earlier in connexion with Rousselot (p. 511) that knowledge by '*connaturality*' refers in authentic Thomism only to knowledge of the practical order, not to that of the speculative.

We have just seen that P. Aubert agrees with P. Phillippe de la

Trinité in his dissatisfaction with the modern Thomist position. It will be of particular interest to see in conclusion how he regards P. Phillippe's own theory, which was quoted earlier as a striking confirmation of the present thesis. P. Phillippe distinguishes the judgement of faith, which remains possible when faith is 'dead' (that is, without charity), from 'the ontological and immediate grasp of God as he is in himself' which is the property of living faith. This is a non-conceptual assent in which 'the intelligence enters into direct relationship with him'. P. Aubert accepts P. Philippe's contention that we must not base our theory of the act of faith on a concept of faith which takes as a norm its 'dead' condition. But he shrinks from accepting P. Phillipe's main conclusion. 'It seems to me that to seek the solution of the difficulties of the act of faith in this radical dichotomy is a capitulation to which one cannot be reconciled unless no other conclusion seemed possible' (p. 638). The suggestion which has been put forward in this book is that no other conclusion does seem possible, and our previous discussions have shown perhaps in some measure that the proposed solution is not a 'capitulation', but a synthesis presenting the traditional teaching in a form which reconciles it with human psychology.

This Appendix must not conclude without recognition of the spirit which informs P. Aubert's great work. It seems fitting to end with a paragraph from his final pages: 'The modern spirit resists the idea of the supernatural, even in the very broad sense of a personal intervention of God in the world, and it is on that level, the level of the religious problem, that the problem of faith is found for so many minds. It is less a matter of choosing between this or that form of religious belief than of admitting the possibility of intimate and personal relations with a personal God to whose thought we allow our ideas to be conformed. In these conditions, faith appears not so much a simple intellectual adhesion to dogma as an attitude of the whole religious man who is placed in relation to the Absolute; it seems also to require at its base something else besides rational arguments, and that is why many recent authors appeal, to establish it, to a certain immediate experience. To take this new point of view into account, it is not necessary to make a complete redrafting of the treatise *De fide*. It is enough to give a fresh shade of meaning to certain theses and to follow up certain suggestions . . .' (pp. 782–3).

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